HIGHWAYS & BYWAYS IN NORMANDY

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOSEPH PENNELL

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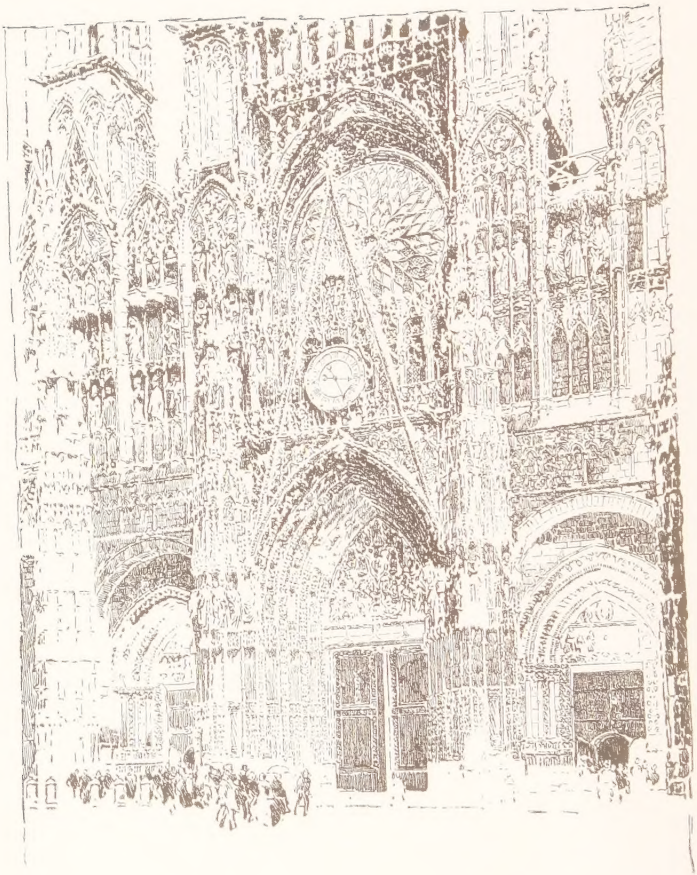
HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS

IN

NORMANDY



Rouen: the Great Doors, a Study, 1897–1899.

Highways and Byways in Normandy

BY PERCY DEARMER, M.A.
WITH · ILLUSTRATIONS · BY
JOSEPH PENNELL

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HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS

IN

NORMANDY

Pont de L'Arche

HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS

IN

NORMANDY

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION. - GISORS

Every one knows Normandy, and therefore Normandy is hardly known at all. It suffers from being too readily accessible, and is remembered generally for its fashionable watering places, or for one or two of its historic towns. Yet now that the bicycle makes any departure from the main railway lines easy for us, there is open even to those with small leisure a new Normandy, a country varied, beautiful, and rich, a series of towns and villages that are less spoilt and not less interesting than the few frequented places. One can stay almost anywhere for a month's holiday without exhausting the number of excursions possible to a moderate cyclist. It would be easy to leave the route that is here suggested

at almost any point and discover fresh country, which I have to leave unmentioned in these limited pages. Indeed, it is with something of pride that I confess to the omission of a cathedral, and several ancient towns, and the most respectable range of hills in Europe. There was no room for them, unless the tour was to become a rush and the book a catalogue. Yet here let me do brief justice to that remote corner of Normandy where are Alençon, Mortagne, the monastery of La Trappe, and the cathedral-village of Sées; and to the beautiful valley of the Orne below Ecouché (where our route has to leave it) whose venerable and modest hills were as high as our modern Alps, in the age when there were no mountains in Switzerland; and to that other corner of the province, the Côtentin, with its ancient churches of Lessay and Valognes, and its bristling port of Cherbourg.

Should you leave the route which I have sketched at any point, as well you may, you will find interesting churches at nearly every village, and many ancient castles and less ancient *châteaux* here and there. For these you can always fall back upon Joanne (Guides-Joanne: Normandie: Hachette et Cie., 7 fr. 50); and indeed I shall assume that you have this excellent guide with you. Its maps alone will save you more money than it costs; they are extraordinarily complete for the more frequented districts about the Seine and the seaboard towns, and for the remoter parts you can get the best cycling maps anywhere in Normandy. The ordnance maps (Carte de France à $\frac{1}{200\,000}$) are of course perfect, and they can be got also at a scale of $\frac{1}{80\,000}$, but if you want them for the whole of Normandy they make rather a large parcel. Joanne's Guide, which can be divided into pocketable parts, gives very complete information about hotels, places of amusement, and museums. It also sketches the history of every town, and goes into detail about the churches. This particularity I have avoided, conceiving it my duty rather to notice the special points of interest and beauty in old churches; but with castles I have

ventured more into detail, since they do not afford the obvious features of the ecclesiastical plan, and are never adequately explained in guide books. In the case of painted glass, which is one of the special glories of Normandy, I think that travellers need for its due enjoyment more description than has hitherto been vouchsafed to them.

Not much need be said in the way of practical advice. France is for the traveller a civilised country as compared with England. Here we have to fight for our luggage on the platform at a journey's end; there we hand up a ticket to the hotel-porter and it appears. Here we have to pay exorbitant charges for the carriage of a bicycle; there it costs only a penny (for registration) from one end of France to the other, and the machine is neither lost nor damaged. As for hotels, it is hardly an exaggeration to say that in France one is treated twice as well and charged half as much as in England. The roads in Normandy are splendid for cycling, the only disadvantage being that the straightness of many main routes hides the beauty of the country, for which reason it is often a good plan, when time is not an object, to pick out the byways on the map. This is the easier, because not only are the byways excellently kept, but the name of a French village is plainly written up, and one does not have ridiculous difficulty (as sometimes in England) in finding out where one is. Signposts and milestones are abundant, and the decimal system renders them perfectly simple and exact. It need hardly be said that the small stones represent hundreds of yards (counting the yard as a *mètre*, though, strictly, 100 *mètres* = 109·36 yards) and the milestones represent *kilomètres*, or thousands of yards. Nevertheless, it is often a long time before English travellers with English cyclometers become used to reckoning distances by this unit; therefore it is convenient to remember that 5 *kilomètres* are about 3 miles.[1]

[1] The exact figures are: 1 *kilomètre* = 1093 yards 1 foot 11 inches; 5 *kilomètres* = 3 miles 188 yards 7 inches; 8 *kilomètres* are just under the 5 miles; 50 come to 31 miles.

Most English people are taught enough French to understand a guide-book in that language, but few know enough to ask properly, and politely, for the simplest things. Swan's *Traveller's Colloquial French* (Nutt, 1*s.*) is an excellent little book for this necessity. It can be supplemented by Nutt's tiny *Conversation Dictionary* (2*s.* 6*d.*), and a French-English dictionary is also worth packing. The *C.T.C. Handbook, Foreign Edition* (Cyclists' Touring Club, 47, Victoria Street, S.W., 1*s.* 6*d.*) should be taken, not so much for the occasional prospect of discount, as for its hints on touring and the exact prices which it gives for a large number of hotels. It is certainly worth while to join the C.T.C., both for the sake of the information it gives, and because the ticket of membership acts for a passport at the Customs and Post Office.

With regard to luggage, it must always be a matter of taste whether one prefers a laden machine with complete independence, or a light machine and a fixed stopping-place. But it is well for the untravelled cyclist to know that he can send his luggage on by train from the hotel cheaply, safely, and easily. I have found it very convenient to combine the two methods, fixing on the stopping-place one or two days ahead, and carrying only enough on my machine for the requirements of a night or two; very often, when a day's run was quite settled, I have packed my bicycle bag with the luggage and ridden with nothing but tools and a lamp. Bicycles are carried very tenderly on French railways, and any sort of protection for them is an intolerable nuisance. It is not, of course, necessary to increase one's luggage with things that can be easily bought; there is an abundance of shops in France, cycling shops especially. The one exception is tobacco, and the Customs will let you pass a pound if you declare it. Money is best carried in the shape of bank-notes, which will be changed at any large or small town at the same rate as English gold. Fresh supplies of bank-notes can be sent out from one's banker in registered envelopes to a hotel, or to a Poste Restante, where a passport or C.T.C. ticket is required to prove one's identity. If one

A Forest Road near Pont-de-l'Arche

takes a portmanteau, it is easy to carry a sufficient change of clothes, including some linen shirts and collars, and also that most precious boon, a folding india-rubber bath. It is most important to wear nothing but woollen clothes for cycling,

and if one does this I do not think it is worth while carrying a mackintosh. There is no place in Normandy where one cannot wear a knickerbocker suit with an easy conscience.

Gisors is for many reasons a good starting place for Norman travel. From Paris, it is the natural gateway into the province; and the traveller from Dieppe will, I think, find it pleasanter to go straight through Rouen, and make his start right away in the country at Gisors; he will probably be quite glad to reach Rouen later on, when he has spent some weeks in remoter places. However, many people will prefer to break the journey, at least for the night, at Rouen, and perhaps to take to the road afterwards. Those who wish to ride the whole way will find the highway from Dieppe to Rouen through Tôtes perfectly direct and rather dull, the only point of interest being the beautiful parlour of the inn on the high road at Tôtes. From Dieppe, the road goes through Boos, which has a pigeon-house finer even than that of the Manoir d'Ango (ch. 13), Fleury, Ecouis, and Étrapagny. Some people may care to lengthen the ride by going round to Pont-de-l'Arche, as the road from Rouen to this place is a great favourite for its beauty; but really the banks of the Seine are beautiful everywhere.

Gisors was the key to Normandy in the days when French fought with English for the duchy. William Rufus foresaw the struggle and fortified the stronghold. Philippe Auguste, the royal warrior who added Normandy to the kingdom of France, did much fighting at Gisors, and when it came into his hands he built on to the castle a round tower like those at Falaise and Rouen. The place where the rivals used to discuss terms is now covered by the railway that runs through the outskirts of the town. It was called the *Champ Sacré* because of an incident that happened during the fever of the Third Crusade, when, on a wintry day of 1188, our Henry II. embraced his foe under the great elm-tree that marked the spot. Henry and Philippe both received the cross from

the Papal Legate ; as they did so, the sign appeared miraculously in the sky, and all the soldiers raised a great shout, "*Dieu le volt! La Croix! La Croix!*" But the reconciliation did not last a year, and the kings soon met again under the famous "Elm of Conferences." This time the weather was hot, and the English knights happened to be standing within the elm's shadow, while the French were exposed to the sun ; whence arose taunts and mockeries on the part of the English, and threats from the French that they would destroy the tree. Then Henry ordered bands of iron to be fixed round the trunk ; and when this was done the French grew more furious than ever. In the end they were victorious : Philippe ordered the iron-clad tree to be cut down, and only its memory remained in a name that was given to the holy field—*Champ de l'Ormeteau Ferré.*

Philippe, who carried through his policy of creating France with cold, unswerving enthusiasm from boyhood to death, took advantage of the treason of John and the imprisonment of Richard Cœur-de-Lion to secure Gisors ; and it was as a result of this encroachment that Richard built Château-Gaillard, whose history will be told in the next chapter. It was at this time that Philippe nearly lost his life at Gisors by an accident that is recalled in one of the modern painted windows of the church. He was retreating from the town by the Paris gate, when the wooden bridge gave way and threw him into the river. Weighted with armour and entangled with his horse, the king caught sight of an image of our Lady which stood over the gateway (for she is patroness of the town, and under her feet it was named to her for gift, *Gisortium Virginis Domarium*), and he cried to her for succour. Afterwards, in memory of his escape from the waters, he placed a golden robe upon the image, and caused the iron-gate beneath it to be gilded. Thenceforward the gate was called the *Porte Dorée*, and the bridge, rebuilt then and often since, retains the name of *Pont Doré* to this day.

A *curé* of Gisors in the time of Louis XIV. commemorated the escape in Latin verse, which begins:

> "Anglum debellans, aliquando Philippus in Eptam
> Cursu præcipiti, ponte ruente cadit.
> Auratam Augustus pinxit sub Virgine portam"

and so on. To-day an old statue of our Lady of Gisors in gilded bronze perpetuates the story; in 1856 this image was rescued from an obscure closet in the church tower and solemnly set up by the Archbishop of Rouen.

There are two buildings of the first importance to be seen at Gisors. One is the castle, a splendid example of ancient military architecture; the other is the church which lays at our feet the history of the French Renaissance.

As we go from the *Trois Poissons* inn along the Rue Fossé-aux-Tanneurs, we pass on our left a curious old sculptured house, whereon acrobats are mingled with sacred subjects: on our right is the river Epte, clear beneath the scum of soap which diligent washerwomen are spreading; on the further side of it a trellis of vine protects a garden of purple phlox. The turning to the right, at the end of the pleasant street, brings us to the east end of the church of St. Gervais, and at once we see that it is like no other church. It is the *chevet* that is before us, bristling with jovial gargoyles, formidable with many buttresses; but it is square in plan, and as we look at the eastern side (for it does not look like an east *end*) we might fancy it was part of an *hôtel-de-ville*. It is, in fact, a late casing of chapels and rooms thrown up round a thirteenth-century choir that was built by the mother of St. Louis. Looking up, we can see the old tower of the same period, and a great nave built right up to its summit, with the evident intention of swallowing the modest tower whenever the new choir should be built. The latest gothic is trying to devour the earliest.

We pass round to the west front, and here we are face to

Gisors Castle.

face with one of the most interesting monuments in France. It is strange at first sight, and perhaps a little desolate and repellant ; but let us consider what it means.

Gisors was the centre of a Renaissance school which had a

style of its own, quite different, as you can see, to that of Rouen, and different also to that of Caen, which you will be able, later on, to compare with it. A notable family of architects lived at Gisors, the Grappin, whose influence was widely felt. Jumel had already begun the transformation of St. Gervais with the *chevet*, which he completed between 1497 and 1503. Robert Grappin took on the work with the nave, which he built c. 1530. He was too bold; for it fell down ten years afterwards with an awful noise, and had to be rebuilt. After Robert came Jean Grappin the First, and then the second Jean. Thus in these three men we have the very last Gothic, the first stage of the Renaissance in the picturesque François-Premier style, and its final development in Vitruvianism.

The north tower belongs to the period of François I. It is classical only in detail. In spirit it is Gothic, a Gothic broadened by the use of the new forms of ornament which so delighted the men of that time. We see here how the transition became possible to the architects who had just been revelling in the picturesque freedom of the Flamboyant style: they evidently did not foresee that their new plaything would become so heavy-handed a master, crushing all their freedom with antiquarian rules. The north tower is full of fancy, full of charming caprice; it has long belfry windows like any older tower, and some of the round *oculi* have pretty busts in them. On the upper story is an octagonal lantern, above it a little drum, and on the drum a tiny cupola. We shall see the whole effect better when we walk up to the castle: even here we can realise how pretty it is, how original, how picturesque.

But the south tower is by Jean Grappin the Second; François Premier's reign is near its end, and the Renaissance is passing into the influence of Vitruvius; the long age of the formal and the correct has begun, an age that has lasted down to our own time. The tower, of ungainly and unprecedented breadth, is built up in orders: the first story is of the Doric order; the second has the horned capitals of the Ionic, and the architect was

going to complete the tale when the Governor of Gisors intervened. "If this tower is built any higher," said he, "any one could mount cannon on its platform and bombard the castle." So the orders were unfolded no further.

Yet the long hand of Vitruvius has not quite crushed the soul out of the last of the Grappin. He binds round the tower a great through-cut wreath of foliage, which is all his own.

The central part of the *façade* is inferior to the south tower, which indeed is, in spite of its faults, infinitely superior to anything that could have been done in the golden age of Louis XIV. The curious vault over the carving of Jacob's dream does not attract me, nor does the heavy and meaningless arcade above it. This upper part was begun by Jean the Second in 1562.

It was before the west porch that Henri IV. was required to give a further proof of his newly acquired orthodoxy, soon after he had decided that Paris was worth a Mass. The king entered Gisors, and presented himself before the church ; but the Curé, Pierre Neveu, was a noted pillar of the faith, and he remembered certain heretical doings of Henri during a former visit : so he shut the gates in the king's face. But Henri of Navarre was not the man to be put out by trifles : "Make me do," he said, "all that is necessary to please God and the people."

"Kneel, Sire, and adore the Cross of our Lord," said the Curé ; and this the king did with much devotion.

"*Vive le roi !*" cried the people. The gates flew open, and Henri entered, saying with his indomitable gaiety, "*Ventre saint-gris !* So now I am King of Gisors !"

If you pass in through the central doorway and turn round to the right, you are inside the unfinished tower. It is a strangely shaped chapel, with a heavy, noticeable vault, and a high spiral staircase in the corner that is admirable in its way. Just outside this chapel is the famous Pilier des Marchands, a pleasant fantasy with its little figures of drapers, shoemakers, tanners, and other *marchands*, and its legend above the heads

of the top series of figures, "*Je—fus—ici—mis—lan*—1526." Beyond it are two other strangely decked pillars: the further is covered with twisted panelling. On the upper part are dolphins most decoratively arranged, the "*dauphin*" having the same meaning to a Frenchman of that time as the Prince of Wales' feathers have to us. The nearer pillar has a very subtle twist in it, and is ornamented with a ring of pearls and a row of cockle-shells.

And now let us take a general view of the nave, which, you will remember, was being rebuilt (after its fall) at the time when the architects of the west front had bidden good-bye to their Gothic mother. Its pier-arches are high and graceful, and the shafts on the piers have become mere mouldings; it has very large clerestory windows, and is flanked by a double row of light aisles on either side. In front of us is the thirteenth-century choir: we turn round and face the classical organ gallery, far too ornate, but a successful essay in pomp for all that. We will pass up the southernmost aisle, noticing the charming bits of old glass in the windows, and come to the south transept gallery, a handsome bit of work, supported by a cornice boldly carved with naturalistic leaves. When we have taken in sufficiently the spirit of this very pleasant interior, we can go out by the north transept door, and look at the north porch, which marks the first appearance of the Grappin in the person of Robert (c. 1520). It is a riot of pretty ornament, and the angels who excitedly play upon musical instruments are the prettiest of all. The panels of the door are typical François-Premier work. You will notice that on one leaf is the Adoration of the Magi, and on the other the Annunciation: each figure stands separate in its panel, which gives a structural completeness to the whole and enhances the quaintness of the story-telling, especially where the dandy St. Gabriel addresses the stolid Madonna. I make bold to put this door considerably above the more celebrated ones at St. Maclou (ch. 11). For one thing it is a real door.

From the east end of the church we will go across the High Street, and through the narrow passage between the houses on its further side, to the castle. It is important not to go into the castle any other way, for we are now to get our first idea of a feudal stronghold. At Rouen you will be able to see in the restoration of the Tour Jeanne-d'Arc one principle of early defence, the use of wooden hoards. At Château-Gaillard you may examine the system of defence in further detail. Here at Gisors you can get an excellent general idea of a splendid castle. We go up first through a small gate and winding staircase into the barbican, or small outer court protecting the entrance.

Now the principle of medieval defence was the opposite to that of modern times. With our present artillery, the besiegers make a breach, and the fortress is taken. In medieval warfare, the defenders opposed to the attacking force a series of obstacles: each was a separate fortress, and when one had been taken the siege had to be begun again under renewed difficulties in a cramped space, where there was little room for the engines of attack. So here, having won your way into the barbican, you would still have the main entrance before you, and from the little recess above the doorway various unpleasant projectiles would be showered upon you. Inside is the chamber for working the portcullis. Away on the right is a formidable round tower, called now the Tour du Prisonnier. From its summit the mangonel, or some other engine, would emphasise the fact that the door is not always the best place by which to enter an enemy's castle.

Nowadays we can pass through the little side gate that a complaisant municipality has left open for us. We stand in the outer court, a vast enclosure, capable of housing a considerable body of men. It is laid out as a public garden, a *jardin anglais*, and children play about among the luxuriant trees, while the peaceful inhabitants of Gisors circulate round a band-stand and listen to the martial strains they love. How far off seem the

days of war! Yet those grey-haired men who are chatting under the laburnum remember how, not thirty years ago, Gisors was the headquarters of a Prussian invading force.

But you must pass out of the gate on the opposite side and look at the walls: their height cannot be realised from within. It is only when you walk up the sides of the moat and notice that the trees which grow in it hardly overtop the battlements that you realise how formidable they are. Yet here would be a better place for the attack, if we were back in medieval times. We should throw countless faggots into the moat till it was filled at the point we had chosen: then we should run close up to the wall a great wooden tower, with ladders on the outside, and up these our soldiers would climb and throw themselves on the parapet of the wall; but first we should have bombarded with stones from our great mangonel the wooden hoards on the wall, so that they could no longer shelter the defenders. Even now we might be driven back by the concentrated arrows, darts, and stones from battlement and towers, or our tower might be burnt by the enemy. Then we should have to make a breach by the approved methods practised at Château-Gaillard (p. 29). Suppose that after days of patient sapping a part of the wall tumbles in and the breach is made. The defenders will have prepared for this by throwing up a wooden palisade behind the threatened bit of wall, like a patch on a bicycle tyre. So as we entered through the breach we should be met by a shower of arrows from behind the palisade. After some hand-to-hand fighting we might force this also, and become possessors of the great court, though our army would be smaller now than it was.

But what avails it? In the midst of the court rises a huge mound, an artificial hill. It is crowned by a buttressed wall of many sides which encloses the inner bailey. Its parapets would be manned by the enemy, and we should have to climb up the steep sides of the mound under a shower of molten lead to storm it. If we succeeded, we should only find it

empty, and our enemy comfortably lodged in the central and topmost tower of all, the *donjon* or keep.

Possibly the enemy might have disappeared altogether by one of the underground passages that were so valuable in ancient warfare. Gisors has one called the *Souterrain de la reine Blanche* which is said to communicate with Neaufles

The Keep, Gisors.

Castle which you can see some three miles away. No one has ever explored the recesses of this passage, for it is blocked up; but everybody in the Vexin knows that it conceals somewhere a treasure that passes the dreams of avarice,—could one but reach the cavern where the fiends guard it! Unfortunately, however, the natural difficulties connected with blocked passages and fiends are increased in this case by the fact that the demon in charge snatches a few moments of well-earned rest only once in the year. This is at Christmas, during the midnight Mass, at the time when the priest reads the long Genealogy, and many who are not demons feel the assaults of slumber. While the Genealogy is a-reading, says the local tradition, the demon sleeps, the subterranean flames die down,

and the diabolic protection is in great measure removed. That is time for the treasure-seeker: but at the completion of the Genealogy, the demon wakes up, and, if the explorer is still within the labyrinths of this under-world, he never sees the light again.

The story goes that Queen Blanche of Castille, the mother of St. Louis, and builder of the choir of Gisors church, gave her name to the passage through a strange feat of war.

She was besieged in Gisors, and one day, having made too rash a sortie, found herself cut off with her little force, and unable to make her way back to the town. Then, as the twilight gathered, she led her followers to the little hill where stood the dismantled castle of Neaufles. The night fell as the Queen's men disappeared into the ruin; the enemy gathered round, and waited for the dawn which should make the Queen of France their prisoner. At the first rays of the sun they crept up to the old castle, but no arrows flew from the lichened loopholes, and the entrance gaped before them undefended. Within, all was open and all empty; not a sound was heard but their own cries of vexation and the clattering of their own armour. The Queen and her men had vanished like the night.

For Blanche had led her knights back to Gisors by the secret passage. And now, while her assailants were seeking for some explanation of the mystery within the castle of Neaufles, she marched out from Gisors with a larger force, and pounced upon her foes, whose confusion gave place to abject terror at the sight of this new marvel, so that they fled incontinently before the Queen.

Such was medieval warfare. But in an age when the defence of a walled city is merely a vigorous protest against the inevitable, we can see no terrors in these bulwarks. They are only picturesque in their garment of lilac and periwinkle; and we will get the lady at the *corps-de-garde* to open the little wooden gate for us. As we enter the inner bailey, we see on the left

the well without which the castle would have been soon reduced ; and near the well are two arches with a gargoyle of unusual shape between them. Its purpose was also unusual ; through it was poured the lead that had been melted on a fire in one of the arched recesses. On the right of the bailey are the remains of a Norman chapel, of interest to us because it was the chapel of *St. Thomas de Cantorbéry* whom we call Becket. We can creep up the side of the keep by the stair turret that gave admittance into its various stories, and from the top we shall have a magnificent view. The turret was a later convenience ; the keep itself was the creation of Robert of Bellesme—*ingeniosus artifex*, Orderic calls him—who built it c. 1097 for William Rufus. Our Henry I. added the bailey walls, and the tower and walls of the city beyond ; and Henry II. completed the work. For do not let us forget that we are standing on the frontier of what was once part of the English Kingdom. These walls were built to keep out the French, though they failed in the end.

But we must follow our guide along the wall to the great round tower on the East and learn why it is called the Tour du Prisonnier. It is in excellent preservation and its shape is characteristic of the age of Philippe Auguste. We walk straight into a vaulted chamber, where there is a brick oven, then we can mount by a staircase in the thickness of the wall to the platform on the top, where we discover what a perilous height this tower is on the outside. Underneath the chamber by which we entered is another, and underneath this we reach with the aid of candles the *cachot* or dungeon, which is famous for its pathetic carvings, scratched out slowly with a nail on the three parts of the wall that receive some little light from the loopholes. They are excellently done ; for amateur art requires a whole-hearted attention, and this at least the prisoners could give.

Many unfortunates must have lived in this cell, for the carvings are traced by more than one hand. But one name

occurs, that of Nicolas Poulain, and he is the Prisoner from whom the tower takes its title and throws up its legends. As a matter of history, it seems that Poulain or Polham was a gentleman in the service of Mary of Burgundy. Taken prisoner at the Battle of Guinegate by Louis XI., he was to have been hanged with several others of his party on a conspicuous tree, but an order coming for his reprieve through the kind officers of the Duchess of Burgundy, he was brought to Gisors, where he lay for four years until Louis was dead.

Old legend and modern novelists have delighted in the Prisoner of Gisors. His name was Poulain, that is the one fact which fiction accepts. He was a page of Queen Blanche of Evreux, whom he rescued from a fire; the old King Philip of Valois found his wife with Poulain at her feet, and threw him into the prison at Gisors. Poulain escaped, was wounded by an arrow, and eventually died in the arms of his beloved. All this is told of him, and much else.

By the Rue de Paris, on the way to Gisors-Ville station, there is a little stream called the Réveillon, concerning which there is a touching superstition that whoever drinks of its water must, however far he may wander, come back and end his life at Gisors. And so, when conscripts have been taken away from this quiet place to the bloody wars of which they knew so little, they would kneel down and drink the magic water,

A longs traits ils buvaient l'espoir

says the poet of Gisors, in the hope that they would see again sweethearts and home. And this gracious fancy has kept many a poor fellow in good heart as he lay shattered upon alien fields. How often must these smiling waters have broken faith! And yet they must sometimes have given just the medicine of hope that was needed to make a man conquer in the fight with death; nor may we blame them even when their magic failed, and peasant lads in their agony passed from

Road to Les Andelys.

dreams of a far-off peaceful home to a home that is yet farther and a peace that is more profound.

Lazy people can go to Les Andelys from Gisors by way of

Saussay-la-Vache ; at Saussay they will have to leave the train and take the *diligence* to Les Andelys, or they can ride this bit, as it is mostly down hill. The active can, of course, easily ride the whole way, and they may find it interesting to go by the Gisors' two neighbour fortresses of Neaufles and Dangu. The former is a ruin, as we have seen ; the latter was one of the finest in the province till the vile taste of the First Empire led its proprietor to destroy the greater part of it. Dangu was a stronghold of the first importance in Anglo-Norman days, because of its command of the frontier valley of the Epte, but the part that remains is not earlier than the fifteenth century. In the reign of Louis XIII the castle belonged to the Comte de Bouteville. This gentleman has a place in history for his defiance of the celebrated edict against duelling ; he and the Comte de Chapelles fought two other lords in broad daylight in the Place Royale at Paris. One of their opponents was killed, and Richelieu determined to prove that no lord was above the law. In spite of the efforts of the greatest families in France, Bouteville and Chapelles were executed in 1627. Eight years afterwards Louis XIII arranged to visit Dangu in the company of the Cardinal, but when the widowed Madame de Bouteville heard of the intended honour, she sent this message :

"The King will be received at Dangu with the honours due to the majesty of a King of France ; but, as for the Cardinal, I shall place under the draw-bridge twelve barrels of powder, to which a light will be applied as he passes, in order to send him to heaven, where he ought to have been long ago."

The King came alone. But Richelieu had his revenge, and in five years Dangu passed into the hands of a recently ennobled favourite of the great Cardinal.

Château-Gaillard from the Seine Valley

CHAPTER II

LES ANDELYS AND CHÂTEAU-GAILLARD

CHÂTEAU-GAILLARD, famed among fortresses, was the child, the pet-child, of Richard Cœur-de-Lion. It was after this adventurous monarch had been released from captivity that he set himself to the task of protecting the Norman frontier against his shrewd enemy, Philippe Auguste. "The devil is loose; take care of yourself!" Philippe had written to John on the news of his brother's release; and the Lion Heart lost no time in showing that he was indeed loose. Philippe had been using his opportunities by invading Normandy, and Richard at once took the field against him, wrung from him a truce, and proceeded to strike a bargain with the Archbishop of Rouen by which he exchanged Louviers and Dieppe for the manor of Andely. Normandy was ceasing to be a natural part of the English kingdom, and Richard saw that it must be held henceforward by force of arms; so, with the instinct of a great general, he fixed on the rock above Andely for the stronghold that was to cover the way to the Norman capital. He had a true genius for fortification, and not only designed the castle himself, but took care to superintend the building

operations. It was a magnificent piece of work; and when Richard saw his Château-Gaillard, his "Saucy Castle," standing white and new under the sun, in all its bravery of painted wood and floating banner, he had full right to his cry of exultation, "*Qu'elle est belle, ma fille d'un an!*"

The fact that the truce he had lately signed pledged him not to fortify Andely, did not trouble his lion heart. But Philippe cursed him in his wrath: "I will take it, were the walls of iron!" he said, "And I would hold it, were they of butter!" was the gay retort of Richard.

But in a year Richard died, and John succeeded him. Whatever ability this scoundrelly brother may have had, he was a weak and luckless general, perhaps because his falseness robbed his followers of confidence. It was the opportunity of Philippe Auguste, who never let an opportunity slip. He sat down before Château-Gaillard, which was held by Roger de Lacy, the Constable of Chester.

It is worth while understanding the excellence of the position which Richard had chosen. The French king would have held Rouen in the hollow of his hand had Château-Gaillard not been built; for the right bank of the Seine was his, and he could bring an army from Gisors, Vernon, and Gaillon into the very heart of Normandy in a day; a flotilla could follow in his rear and bring up all the necessary supplies. But now the great castle covered Rouen, held the river, and threatened to cut off any French army that should get to the wrong side of it.

The Seine at this part, as at very many others, winds abruptly so as to form a peninsula. Across the neck of this peninsula of Bernières, a rampart was thrown which made it a safe camping ground, covered as it was by the Château-Gaillard on the opposite side of the river. A little island stands in the midst of the river; this was turned into an octagonal fort with towers and ditches, and the bridge ran across it. Some ruins of this work remain. A *tête-de-pont*, or fortified enclosure, pro

tected the approach to the bridge, and within this enclosure the town of Petit-Andely soon sprang up. Grand-Andely, isolated from Petit-Andely by a lake, was also fortified. Above Petit-Andely, where the promontory of chalk cliff rises to a height of more than a hundred yards, the Saucy Castle itself was built. Across the river at this point was set a stockade of three rows of piles; and from the site of the stockade a wall runs up the rocks to an outer tower, the ruins of which lie at the base of the Castle keep. Thus, any one trying to force a passage up the river and attack the bridge would be held back here in an awkward position.

Now a besieging army could not encamp on the rocky escarpment by the river, nor on the lake between the two Andelys. Its only possible position would be on the high plateau to the south-east of the castle. This was indeed the one vulnerable point; for the plateau is on higher ground than the castle itself. Therefore Richard set himself to protect the south-east angle with special care.

The path from Petit-Andely will take you into Château-Gaillard by a postern, P, at the north-west end, nearest to the village. When you have enjoyed the view of the Seine, with its encircling hills that look as if they too were covered with bastions, it will be best, I think, to make your way straight to the remotest point of the castle, the foreworks, which surround the outer court, B, and were built to protect the castle proper from the dangerous plateau, PL. This outer court is triangular in shape, and, in addition to its four flanking towers, is armed at its furthest point with a massive tower, A (the High Angle Tower), which is exactly opposite the plateau and was built high enough to command it, and to command as well the whole advance work. The only stone staircase in the place was fitted to this tower, in the thickness of the wall, so that the garrison could carry up projectiles safely and easily here where they would be most needed. The walls, too, at this angle are enormously high, and at their base the fosse is so

broad and deep that one marvels to think how these enormous ditches could have been cut out of the chalk in one year, This fore-court, B, is a complete fortress in itself; another fosse separates it from the outer bailey C of the castle proper; and the only connection was by a wooden bridge.

The walls of the outer bailey C (which you will next enter, following the inevitable order of a siege), had five principal towers; but part of the north-east wall is gone, with two of its towers. This bailey, besides forming the second line of defence, was the principal dwelling place of the garrison. It contains a well and some remarkable cellars—*grottes* they are popularly called—which are cut out of the chalk, leaving pillars of it for their support. On the south-western side of the bailey are the ruins of the officers' quarters, O (the rank and file of the garrison no doubt occupied wooden buildings on the open space above the cellars). This building, O, had a chapel over the living-rooms, and reached higher than any of the neighbouring towers. It was into one of its windows that Bogis climbed, as we shall see: it seems to have been a curiously neglected weak point; for a boy who was with me last year climbed into one of the windows with the greatest ease. Of course it would not have been so easy to scale when the wall had its smooth outer coating of masonry; but still the fosse is remarkably shallow, and the windows dangerously near to the ground.

As you stand in the outer bailey there rise before you the strange, bossed walls of the inner bailey, D. They are coated, as it were, with an unbroken succession of seventeen half-towers, and this curious giant-ribbed surface is one of the most striking features of Château-Gaillard; they must have been more imposing still before the battlements which crowned them had disappeared. An enemy holding the outer bailey would not only have these walls before him, but would be further held back by the fosse which isolates them from that bailey. This fosse was crossed on the east by a wooden

CHATEAU-GAILLARD
Scale of Yards
0 10 20 40 60 80 100
PL.
A
B
Well
C
D
E
K
N
P
THE SEINE
Walker & Boutall sc

bridge that communicated with the gateway, E, the principal entrance of the citadel, protected by a double portcullis, and commanded by the keep, K, whence the whole length of the entrance could be enfiladed.

The keep is conspicuous even in the plan by reason of the enormous thickness (nine yards) of its walls, which project in a square-edged spur into the bailey, opposite the entrance. The back of the keep, where the hill falls away precipitously, is circular in plan, as is also the interior, so that the spur on the bailey side means so much extra masonry at this the only point where sapping could have been possible. The keep has curious buttresses shaped like reversed pyramids; the upper part where they joined is destroyed, but no doubt at their juncture was machicolation for near defence, and at the top of the walls a parapet for more distant operations. In the ground floor of the keep is one window, in the first story there are two; above them were, according to Viollet-le-Duc, two more stories. No doubt a conical roof crowned the whole; and one can imagine how magnificent this donjon looked when Richard first saw it finished and new.

Behind the keep are the ruins of the governor's house, with a pigeon house, cellars, and other domestic offices beyond in the outer flanking towers. The governor reached these towers by a ladder, and the *chemin de ronde* by stairs; other stairs led from his house to one of the windows of the keep.

A word as to the exits and entrances of Château-Gaillard will bring us back to the postern from which we started. From the high angle tower, A, the great fosse runs down to the base of the escarpment in order to cover a sortie towards the river; this fosse was reached by tunnels which started from the cellars of the outer bailey. Again, the outer tower, O.T., which covered the stockade across the river, was connected by tunnelling with the inner bailey. The gateway, E, was only reached by a roadway which ran between the walls of the two baileys to an outer gateway near the northernmost

tower, N (now destroyed), not far from the present postern entrance. And, lastly, this postern, P, by which you climbed into the castle, is protected by a massive tower.

Such is Château-Gaillard, a fortress not planned on the usual Norman lines, but an original work of genius. It is built purely for strength: there is no sculpture anywhere, only the rubble is carefully revetted with stone. Nothing was spared, in the stupendous labours of that single year, to make it impregnable. And impregnable it surely was. Yet Philippe Auguste, that greatest of castle-winners, took it; and he took it by force, by sheer force and dash, with but one aid of lucky strategem, as we shall now see.

Philippe invested the place with his usual skill. The first thing he did was to take the peninsula of Bernières, which covered the approach to Les Andelys across the river. His next step was to get possession of the river itself. First he destroyed the bridge; then, with the help of some bold swimmers, he broke through the stockade, so that he was able to bring down his flotilla, which consisted of flat-bottomed ferry-boats. With these boats he made a bridge of his own, and protected it with two great turrets sheathed with iron.

King John now tried to relieve the besieged; but the line of circumvallation across the peninsula stopped him in that direction; and when he tried to cut off the French force by breaking up Philippe's bridge of boats, many of his own boats were sunk by heavy beams thrown on them, and the rest were dispersed. John then disappeared, leaving his enemy to continue the investment without molestation. Philippe took the island-fort in August, 1203, and then occupied Petit-Andely, the inhabitants flying to Château-Gaillard for refuge.

The fate of these poor people is the most terrible incident of the siege. Roger de Lacy, the Governor of Château-Gaillard, felt himself unable to support so large a body of non-combatants, and sent them forth from his walls. Philippe allowed the first batch to pass his lines, and then ordered that no more should

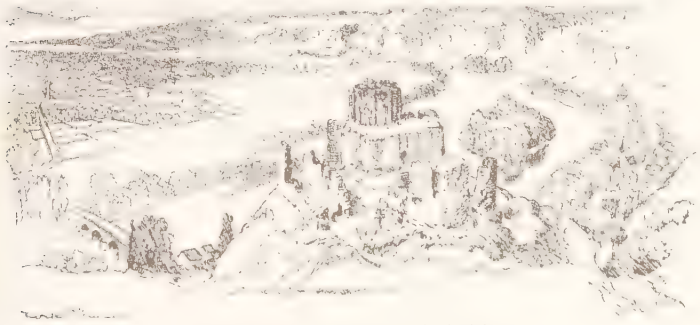
be let through. Some two hundred fugitives found themselves driven back by French arrows to the castle walls, and then welcomed with a shower of stones from the English. An awful time now began for this company of old men, women, and children: driven back mercilessly by both sides, they took refuge in a little valley between the castle and the French lines. Here they had no shelter from wind and rain, no food but the grass. Half their number died; and, to crown the horror, the survivors devoured an infant that one woman had borne in her misery. At last, King Philippe happened to pass near the pitiful remnant; they threw themselves before him and begged for release, till even he was touched. Bread was given them, and they were allowed to pass through the French lines.

Meanwhile Philippe had been establishing his forces round the now completely invested castle. He threw up lines of circumvallation (against attempts at outside succour) and contravallation (against sorties from within); and between these entrenchments—part of which, by the way, you can still see for yourself—he settled his camp in wooden huts for the winter. By February, 1204, he saw that the garrison was too well provisioned for starvation to be possible, and he therefore commenced the active siege in form.

He had naturally occupied the plateau, PL, on the south-east of Château-Gaillard, the one dangerous point, as we have seen, for the defenders. He now levelled the tongue of land which brings the plateau up to the edge of the great fosse outside the high angle tower, A. Here he set up a wooden tower, and the usual engines, pierriers and mangonels for hurling projectiles. The French could now shoot their stones and arrows right into the outer court, B, and the English were at a disadvantage in returning the missiles.

While the artillery was thus engaged, the pioneers prepared to make a breach in the walls of the outer court. Before gunpowder was invented (and indeed for some time after) this had to be done at close quarters. We know that the

invaders of Château-Gaillard proceeded in the usual manner: first, they threw bundles of sticks and grass into the great fosse until they had nearly filled it, and were able to get across to the foot of the tower, A. They had not, however, filled the huge ditch high enough; their ladders did not reach as high as the masonry of the tower, but rested against the solid chalk. The story of the siege says that the pioneers then stuck



Château-Gaillard and Petit-Andely.

their daggers into the chalk and climbed by their aid to the base of the tower, where, covering themselves with their shields, they helped their companions up and began the sap. There can, however, be little doubt that, in order to dislodge sufficient masonry, they must have brought up more bundles, so that they could work under the protection of the "cat." The cat was a small movable shed that was run up to the foot of the wall, so that the stones and arrows and fire which were showered from the ramparts upon the pioneers should not reach them. As they removed the masonry, the pioneers shored up the wall with beams in the usual fashion, filled the hole with inflammable material, and at length set fire to it and withdrew. As the shoring timbers burnt away, the masonry above began to sink with its own weight; a piece of the wall came tumbling down, and the breach was made. The French rushed in, and soon made themselves masters of the outer court.

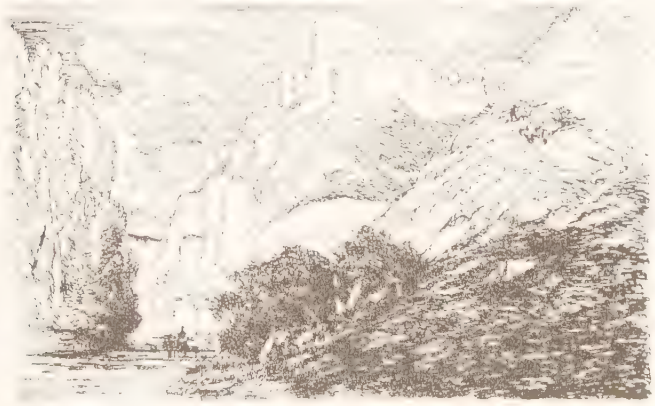
But though they now held the foreworks, the worst part of their task was still to be done. The walls and towers of the outer bailey, C, stood intact before them, and within this was the massive, ribbed wall of the inner bailey, D, which itself protected the heart of the fortress, the great keep.

As they were prowling round the outer bailey, seeking for some means of entrance, a warrior named Bogis noticed that a window peered incautiously from the building, O. He climbed on to the shoulders of his companions, and managed to get enough foothold to reach the window. Finding this unprotected, he fixed a cord in the empty room, so that his companions were able to follow him easily and secure the place unobserved. The door was fastened that led into the bailey, C, from the room which the gallant little band now held. They raised a great shout, to give the English an exaggerated idea of their numbers, and tried to force the door. The garrison took the alarm, and made a great fire against the wall of the building. Bogis and his companions would soon have been driven to retire the way they came had not the wind turned the fire and smoke away from the burning door on to the faces of the garrison. By this stroke of luck the assailants were able to break into the bailey and drive their opponents to take refuge behind the great walls of the inner bailey, D.

Being now in possession of the bailey C, the French began to lay siege to the inner bailey. With incredible efforts they established a mangonel opposite the gateway E. They then advanced their pioneers under a "cat" to the same point. At length they shattered the gate, effected a breach, and dashed into the inner bailey.

So fiercely did they attack the garrison—now reduced to a hundred and eighty men—that they cut them off and surrounded them. The English were unable to force their way to the postern of the keep, and after a hand-to-hand fight were forced to surrender, March 6th, 1204. Thus the crowning triumph of Richard's art, the massive keep, was useless after all.

In the days when iron protected against iron, it took a good deal of fighting to kill a man, and it is said that only four men fell in this last encounter. Philippe Auguste rewarded Roger de Lacy for his courage by giving him liberty. The English garrison marched out of the castle, and the golden fleurs-de-lys



Château-Gaillard.—The Keep.

floated over the proud donjon. Château-Gaillard had fallen, and with it Normandy was lost to England.

A hundred years later the castle was the scene of one of those events which filled the hideous reign of Philippe le Bel. Jeanne, Blanche, and Marguerite, the wives of his three worthless sons, Louis, Philippe, and Charles, were accused of adultery. Philippe's wife, Jeanne, was acquitted; for she was an heiress, and her divorce would have lost the province of Franche-Comté. Charles got rid of Blanche, and she was imprisoned at Château-Gaillard, whence she was afterwards taken to end her days in an abbey near Pontoise. Louis sent his wife, Marguerite, to the castle also; but he was unable to get a divorce. Being determined to be rid of her, he gave orders that she should be quietly murdered. One night this poor girl of twenty was taken in her cell, and in spite of her

beauty and her entreaties, was strangled in her shroud. The lovers of these princesses, or the reputed lovers (for who can discover the truth about the victims of that reign of terror?), were flayed alive.

The three brothers, who are known to history as Louis le Hutin, Philippe le Long, and Charles le Bel, did not long enjoy the throne that fell to them all. It was said that the curse of the Templars, whom Philippe le Bel had tortured and slaughtered, was upon them. They followed each other in quick succession, as death caught them one by one; "*et ainssinc*," says an old chronicler mysteriously, "*toute la noble lignie et belle du Biau roy trespassa en moins de* XIII. *ans, dont tiut orent grant merveille; mès Diex scet la cause, laquelle nous ne savons.*" They had had one sister, Isabelle, who became the mother of our Edward III., and it was his claim to the French throne as grandson of Philippe le Bel that plunged France into the Hundred Years War.

After being taken and retaken again and again during the Hundred Years War, the castle fell, as even the sauciest must, into a respectable middle age, opening its gates with nothing more than a grumble to Henri IV. in 1591, and serving for a night as royal palace. But the authorities of Normandy were aware that the Saucy Castle had become a venerable nuisance, whose existence was a constant temptation to any turbulent soldier with ambitions. They therefore in 1593 begged the King to demolish this citadel and its neighbour at Pont de l'Arche. The King consented, and gave Château-Gaillard to the Archbishop for building materials. Thus did the history of this castle end in entire grimness of sobriety. Yet its last obsequies are not without their touch of humour. In 1603 the privilege of quarrying in the castle was extended to the Capuchins of Grand-Andely, who wanted to mend their convent. So far all went well. But seven years later the same favours were granted to the Penitents of Petit-Andely, whereat, of course, arose great contention. With two religious brother-

hoods and two intimate towns involved, there were all the materials for a very pretty quarrel. The Capuchins of course could not come to terms with the Penitents, and Louis XIII had to intervene; but the quarrel only freshened up after the royal mediation. Next year a truce was signed upon the very ruins themselves by these pacific belligerents. The unhappy Capuchins found, when it was too late, that the acute document only allowed them to take the stones from the walls themselves, a difficult and dangerous operation, while the Penitents had secured all the rest. It was owing to the legislation which resulted from this quarrel that so much is left us of the old walls as we now see.

Thus ended in ignominious peace the greatest monument of Richard Cœur-de-Lion.

Before we go to the more imposing Church of the Grand-Andely, let us visit that of Petit-Andely, St. Sauveur. It is smaller, but it is perfect. A few years after the castle had brought the fortified village into existence, the church was built; it was finished before the first half of the thirteenth century was over, and later styles left untouched this gem of early French art. It was not required to hold a large population, and yet a more dignified church could hardly be imagined. It is innocent of the decorations with which later architects covered their buildings: perhaps they felt, as we feel, that to have added anything to its perfect simplicity would have spoilt it. Surely that round ambulatory under its sweeping flying buttresses is all the ornament that it requires,—for proportion is the very source of beauty. To have tried to improve St. Sauveur would have been like tattooing the Venus of Milo.

It has a short nave of two bays only, which gives it the general plan of a Greek cross, and there are no galleries in nave or transepts; only a window irregularly arranged here and there does the work of the clerestory, and this absence of horizontal lines gives height and dignity to the little nave and transepts. The whole building is finely vaulted. The piers of the crossing

have clustered shafts, which are a comparatively unusual luxury in France. Everywhere are the satisfactory mouldings which distinguish the period.

In front of us is the round choir, and about it the round ambulatory, and beyond is the round Lady Chapel. The choir has dear little pillars for its seven bays, and is marked

Near Petit-Andely.

out for special distinction by a triforium arcade, made up of pairs of arches, over which is a clerestory with a quatrefoil between each pair of lights. Some of the original corbels remain, and those nearest to us on the chancel arch represent on one side a child in pain and on the other a child that smiles. Traces abound of the paintings which were laid on in the XV century: the wall is red, powdered with black fleurs-de-lys; in the caps and mouldings is ochre and green; in the triforium are figures of saints in a good state of preservation, and over the high altar is the Rood with Mary and John. The glass above is modernised. It is worth remembering that here, as in other Roman Catholic churches, the original proportions of the sanctuary are spoilt by the arrangements which modern Roman ceremonial requires. The altar here entirely dwarfs the arches,

and its ornaments are of glaring inappropriateness. Whenever we see a gothic chancel or chapel we must bear in mind that it was built for a plain altar, which was draped in rich material, but had no gradines behind it, and generally had a curtain at the back and sides about the height of the officiating priest. It was usually devoid of ornaments, and had at the most two candlesticks on it at service time. As a Gothic church was built for its altars, the changes which modern fashion impose upon it put the whole work out of focus. And this is worse when the modern altars are so-called Gothic. At Louviers we do not need to be told that the huge Madonna holding out her son in such dramatic fashion was not in the mind of the mediæval architect; but at Evreux we shall see a white and gold erection which the guide-book tells us (in big print) has been recently designed "in the style of the XIV century." As a matter of fact, it is no more like a Gothic altar than St. Paul's Cathedral is like the Parthenon.

If you sit in one of the aisles and look at the vaulting of the ambulatory, you will see that the entrance arches are irregular in their lines, and that the vaulting behind them is strangely uneven. They were made thus so as to act as buttresses for the relief of the choir pillars, because the frequent inundations of that time made the soil insecure. As you walk round the ambulatory you may notice the high, round abaci of the shafts, and the three lancet windows in the lovely little Lady Chapel.

No part of France or England is richer in painted glass than Normandy, and the church of Grand-Andely (Notre-Dame) contains some of the best glass in the province. But the building itself is also of great interest, and it will be convenient to look at that first.

We enter by the western door an Early French church—the west front, though unusual in its arrangement and containing modern statues, is unmistakable thirteenth century work; so are the pier arches of nave and choir. But the triforium

and the east window rather suggest our own Perpendicular, and betray a later date, while the tracery of the triforium, some of it extremely graceful, belongs clearly to the time when gothic traditions were being forgotten, to the sixteenth century, in fact. Still, we are unmistakably in a church of early date, until we reach the crossing, and then all is changed. The piers of the tower have been remodelled. The south transept has a sumptuous gallery and rose-window, by which the whole wall is made open to the day, and its triforium is a taller, lighter edition of that of the nave. But the north transept, what a strange difference! There is still a rose, but it is classical; there is still a triforium, but it is the queerest thing imaginable, made up of round and square holes between little pilasters. There is also a clerestory, a round-headed arcade, with tracery above it, and here and there among the pier arches Corinthian capitals appear.

So the thirteenth century west front deceived us a little. We go out again through its door, and find that the sides of the church are indeed very different to the front. The south aisle and transept are rich Flamboyant, and little beasts crawl up its windows to do service as crockets. The transept is, indeed, late fifteenth, its porch and the chapels early sixteenth century work. We pass round the west again looking up at the pure lines of its early towers, and come to the north transept. There are excellent little caryatids of Jean Gonjon's school in the porch, two Victories above distribute palms and crowns, and sculptured vases do duty as gargoyles. The columns that flank the porch have a peculiarity: they are too short for their work, but the architect could not make them longer without breaking his rule as to the module or proportion between the diameter and length of a column; so he filled up the gap above the capital with a sort of cushion. The architect who, about a century later, designed the clumsy, square columns of the aisle at the side had no such scruples.

To turn from form to colour we will go into the church

again and walk straight up to the mass of blue glass that is visible at the end of the south aisle. This glass in the south choir aisle contains the history of St. Peter; though fine in colour, its figures are rather lifeless and ungraceful, and have commonplace expressions. They are from the same cartoons as those of St. Vincent at Rouen. The next glass, that in the Chapel of the Sacred Heart, is restored. The choir windows contain life-size figures of the Apostles holding the articles of the Creed, according to the legend that each of them contributed one sentence. There is also in the western-most window a figure of St. Romain with his gargoyle, of which we shall hear again when we come to Rouen. This window, which contains also St. Catherine and St. Nicholas of Myra, is shown by its coats of arms to have been given by Henri II. about the year 1550, for they show his titles as Governor of Normandy and Rouen (1531), as Dauphin (1536), as Duke of Brittany and King of France (1547).

The best glass is in the south aisle and the clerestory of the nave. Let us take first the aisle, beginning at the east:—

1. St. Sebastian: St. John Baptist: the Blessed Virgin: an Archbishop: (probably St. Évode, who died at Andely): the Magdalen: note the gorgeous use of yellow ornament in this window: the magnificently dressed figure of the Virgin and Child has, to me, a quite wonderful charm of dignity and feeling.

2. The Annunciation: a superb Assumption: the monk Theophilus, delivered by our Lady from the shaggy red devil with whom he had signed a pact. This most precious work is dated 1540.

3. Do not pass this window because of the ugly modern glass in which St. Clotilde figures as the British Matron. The upper lights are old, and represent with delightful subtilty and truth of drawing a procession of St. Clotilde's relics; it shows us how the clergy and people looked in the sixteenth century, the priest singing as he walks in apparelled albe and crossed stole, the clerks, in full surplices, with cross and lights, the

gentlemen in cloaks and coats of varied cut which illustrate delightfully the peas-cod doublet and other fashions of the time.

4. Life of St. Léger. Léger was Bishop of Autun and a great plotter in the seventh century; neither his rivalry with Ebroin nor anything else we know of his life had aught that was saintly about it. (1) He is banished to the monastery of Luxeuil (which he deserved, for he had previously imprisoned Ebroin there). (2) The Duke of Champagne puts out Léger's eyes, and cuts off his tongue. (3) By order of Ebroin, Léger is stripped of his bishop's robes. (4) He is a prisoner. (5) Ebroin has him beheaded.

5. Story of St. Clotilde. The upper lights deal with the struggle of Gondebaud with Clotilde's father, and the inevitable murders of the period. In the lower lights is the story of the betrothal of Clovis and Clotilde: (1) Clovis gives the ring to Aurélien. (2) Aurélien, disguised as a beggar, gives the ring to Clotilde, who is splendid with her red hair and golden dress. (3) Gondebaud gives Clotilde to Aurélien. (4) She arrives at the palace of Clovis.

6. Rest of the story of Clotilde. Upper lights: (1) Clotilde in prayer; (2) Clovis promises her to become a Christian; (3) Battle of Tolbiac, at which Clovis vowed to turn Christian if he had the victory; (4) Clotilde instructs her husband. Lower lights: (1) Baptism of Clovis in the year 496; (2) His alms; (3) Clotilde builds a church at Andely; (4) Miracle of the fountain at Andely (p. 40). Nothing could be better than the architecture and landscapes of this series.

Perhaps the glass in the south clerestory of the nave is the finest of all. Worked into tracery, some of which is very original and graceful, it is peculiarly well suited to its high position, and has a character quite distinct from the rest. The first three windows, especially, have a free and massive solemnity that reminds one sometimes of Blake. Notice the limbs, and clouds, and fire, of the Creation, which is the subject of the first window. In this and the next the greens, and the blue,

and flesh-colour are splendidly managed, and so are the blues, browns, and purples of the third. The Creation window was given by the Confrérie du Saint-Sacrement, or Frères de la Charité, a pious confraternity that was to be found in most towns of Normandy, and did much the same work as the *Misericordia* in Florence, with the additional duty of escorting processions of the holy Sacrament. They are represented at the foot of the window carrying a corpse to burial, and wearing their long cloaks and characteristic blue hoods. What skill the artists of this time showed in making their figures walk gracefully! The second window gives the history of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel. In the third is Noah, with a delightful Renaissance ark. In the fourth are scenes from the life of Abraham, of Joseph, and of Moses. The upper lights of the fifth are restored; below are the Red Sea and the Manna. In the sixth are Moses with the Seventy very dignified Elders, and the death of Korah, Dathan and Abiram.

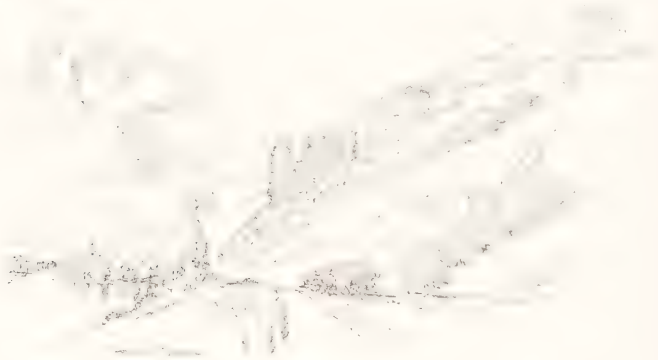
By way of contrast there is some glass of the period of decadence in the northern chapels—1, St. Christopher: 2, The Crucifixion (1616): 3, St. Vincent (1611). Examples of this period are rare.

The organ-case is a magnificent example of Renaissance art, both in its architecture and its carving. The organist's seat is the loveliest part of this superb piece of work. It is dated 1573, and the names are clearly inscribed under the figures that adorn it; they are the queerest jumble of virtues, sciences, and gods, with a Madonna on the organist's seat and some Old Testament saints on the *buffet*. Most of them might as well bear other names, but Geometry plays the triangle, and Minerva has her attributes.

In the south-west chapel there is a well-known group of the Entombment, attributed to the age of Louis XIII.; the figures are carved with great skill and boldness.

In Grand-Andely, and not far from the church, is the Fontaine de Sainte-Clotilde. A basin surrounds the cold and clear

waters of the spring, and is divided into two parts, for men and for women. Above it is the statue of the saint surrounded by crutches and other votive offerings. On June 2nd, the vigil of St. Clotilde's day, the *fête* of Grand-Andely, there is a pilgrimage to this spot, and wine is poured into the spring with much ceremony.

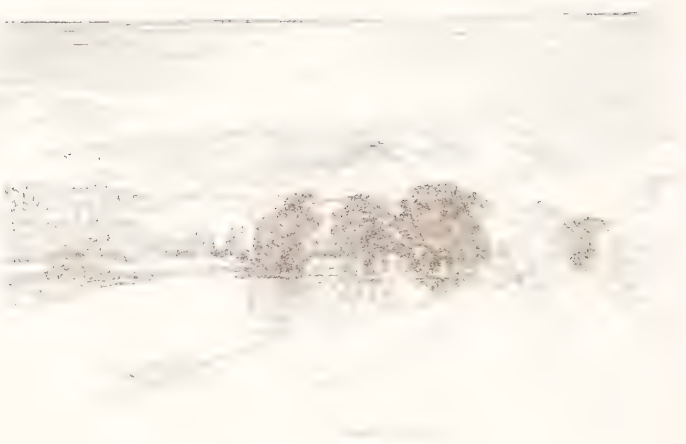


The Seine near Les Andelys.

It was with the event that the wine commemorates that the history of Les Andelys began. Clotilde was building a convent for nuns at Andely; the workmen were tired and thirsty, but the year had been bad and there was nothing but water for them to drink. Whereat they grumbled, as others have grumbled since; and Clotilde, moved, we are told, by compassion, and perhaps also fearing a strike, prayed that the water might have (for the workmen only) the strength and taste of wine. After drinking of it, the masons sought out the queen, threw themselves on their knees, asking her pardon, "*et la recognoissant pour une saincte de grands mérites devant Dieu, et confessèrent que jamais ils n'avoient beu si bon vin.*" The convent was happily finished, and became so considerable that, in the days of Bede, the English thanes used to send their daughters over to Andely to be educated. The Norman invaders destroyed the convent, but the church of Notre-Dame

was built on its site. From those early times till now, the well of St. Clotilde has been a place of pilgrimage, famed for its healing virtues. No doubt the time to see Grand-Andely is the 2nd and 3rd of June, the vigil and feast of St. Clotilde.

But whether you elect to go then, or in a season less crowded, it will be necessary to take some refreshment at the Hôtel du Grand-Cerf, a famous house of the sixteenth century, of which you can see the principal room, with the panelled *tambour* that leads out of it, and its great fireplace, high as the ceiling, vigorously carved, and furnished with a collection of dogs and other kitchen cattle. In the early years of the nineteenth century a remarkable inn-keeper took this remarkable inn (which had been built for the Sires du Viennois and did not become an inn till 1749): for forty years he laboured to fill it with every kind of curiosity—tapestries and china, iron-work, enamels, rare prints, old pictures, and furniture. The place was a veritable museum, and so well known that its visitors' book became one of its greatest treasures. Victor Hugo's name was there, of course, and that of Walter Scott lay hidden under the signature of *Gautier l'Ecossais*.



The Seine near Vernon.

CHAPTER III

LOUVIERS, EVREUX, CONCHES, BEAUMONT-LE-ROGER, SERQUIGNY, BERNAY

THE shortest way to Evreux is by the twenty-two mile road through Gaillon; but there remains only the shadow of the once gorgeous Château de Gaillon, and it will be better to go from Les Andelys to Louviers, which will make the journey to Evreux half a dozen miles longer. The road starts through the pretty woods of Bernières peninsula, and we can see the grand sweep of the chalk hills around Château-Gaillard as we go along. After a few miles we climb up a hill, where we can sit under the cherry-trees at the top bend of the road and look upon the whole splendid landscape spread out before us, the castle still visible in the distance. Soon we shall drop down into the sumptuous valley of the Eure where the roofs of Louviers glitter in the sun. It is one of those small and pleasantly situated industrial towns which form the paradise of the factory hand; not less pleasant is it to the traveller, as he makes his way under the trees and over the streams and past the

two or three old streets that form the heart of Louviers to its church of Notre-Dame.

Before us is the south aisle, a wonderful efflorescence of stone which culminates in the porch. There Flamboyance displays itself for all it is worth ; the porch projects well forward on two piers and has remarkable gargoyles and pendants ; here a monkey crawls and thistles flourish, and there a bat is carved and a vine, with many other things. But before we enter, let us go round the outside. At the east end are quite plain lancet windows, and we can see that the nave as well belongs to the thirteenth century. We need not linger to notice how oddly classical the flying buttresses and pinnacles are, for the west front has more to tell us. Its middle part belongs to the thirteenth century, a pretty doorway on its south side is of the fifteenth, and on the north a great rock-like tower with long, powerful buttresses frowns down upon us like a fortress. This indeed it is, and in this front is summed up the history of the town.

Louviers was one of the places given to the Archbishop of Rouen by Richard I. in exchange for the precious strategical site of Andely. Thus it led for long a peaceful life, the merchant thriving under the shadow of the church ; and though the town was, as Froissart tells us, *grosse et riche et moult marchande*, it was not thought necessary for two centuries to surround it with walls. But during the Hundred Years War (1346) the city was taken and pillaged by the English ; and the burghers had to learn the art of fortification. This also, alas ! turned to their hurt, for in 1431 they defended themselves so well against the soldiers of Henry VI. that the English became ruthless in victory and left nothing of the town but its pillaged churches. Nine years later the English were finally driven out of these parts.

Much of this history can be traced in the church. Begun about 1220 in the happy times of peace, its formidable belfry was built in the years of fortification (c. 1366) that followed its

first sack. After the second siege, the church was refurnished, and then (1495), when Louviers had settled down again after the civil war of the "Public Weal," the chapels were added and the rest of the Flamboyant work.

The interior is unusual, and most impressive. The pierced triforium, the clerestory, and the high lantern give it a character of its own, and contrast with the low double aisles, which are so different in their feeling of mystery to the high double aisles of Gisors. In this imposing parish church we can realise the originality of the Early French architects. The corbels of the nave, too, are noticeable, and so are the piers with their capitals.

There are many interesting things in the church. In the south aisle is a painting of a big St. Christopher, and it is near the principal entrance, because whoever saw the image of St. Christopher was safe from peril through the rest of the day. On one of the great piers of the crossing is a figure that holds a soup basin. The people of Louviers were nicknamed *mangeurs de soupe*, because in 1591 they let their city be taken by surprise while they were at dinner. It was Marshal Biron who captured the town; he marched on it because the Parliament (driven here from Rouen) was treating the Huguenots with great cruelty. There is also some excellent glass. That of St. Nicholas in the north aisle (which was given by the tanners, and contains their arms, a golden scraper) presents the odd legend of the Jew and the Peasant; it is entirely miraculous, for it tells how a simple-minded Jew was outwitted by a crafty peasant. This is the story: A peasant, having long since borrowed money from a Jew, and being summoned before the judge, offered to swear that he had already repaid the sum. He got the Jew to hold his staff, and then swore that he had returned to his creditor more than he had ever received. Now this was a very lying truth, for the staff which the Jew so innocently held was hollowed out, and within the hollow was the money hidden. The debtor won his case, and walked

The Porch, Louvain

merrily away, stick in hand. But he did not escape the justice of heaven. As he lay down to rest by a cross-road, he was killed by a cart which passed over his body and crushed also the hollow staff, scattering its contents on the ground. The good Jew was so touched by this terrible judgment that he refused to take the money (as I have said, the story is full of miracle); but, on being pressed, the Israelite consented to take back his due—on one condition, that the dead man should be brought to life again. This was easily accomplished by the power of St. Nicholas; whereat—last miracle of all—the Jew was baptized.

Evreux is a pleasant little town, flanked by a forest, surrounded by hills, and full of soldiers and clergymen. There always seems to be brightness and life in the Hôtel du Grand-Cerf, and I daresay in other hotels as well. The beautiful river Iton branches out among the houses, to form many of those pretty corners which are more common in France than in England; and on some parts of its course may be found fragments of the wall which was built during the Roman occupation. Several of the Roman treasures have been discovered and placed in the Museum, chief among them a bronze statue of Jupiter Stator.

If we come to Evreux for one thing, it is certainly the Cathedral, which is worth coming a very long way to see. But, were the Cathedral burnt down to-morrow, the belfry would still be sufficient cause for a pilgrimage; and were the belfry utterly destroyed or restored, there would yet remain the Bishop's Palace and St. Taurin.

I remember once, when I was staying some thirty miles from Evreux, puzzling over the guide-books to find out whether it was worth while riding over to see it. They gave me a tepid impression, and I did not go. Yet there are few churches in France more beautiful than Evreux Cathedral. In it you will find three special things to study: the eastern part of the interior where you can see Gothic in the most perfect and

logical stage of its development, set off by lovely glass; the wonderful series of wooden screens which extend all round the church; and the classical west front, which it has been the fashion to abuse because it is not covered with stone cauliflowers.

Yet, as I have a reason for approaching the Cathedral a certain way, we will go to the Place de la Mairie first of all, and look at the belfry. It stands there, not so very tall, but noble and well-proportioned, with a certain air of strong self-sufficiency. Like those grander belfries further north which tell of the independence of the burghers of Flanders, it is the symbol of liberty and of order. When a city could build such a tower as this, it meant that the people had arrived at a higher state of civilisation than the Feudal castle could give. The Evreux belfry, far finer than that at Rouen, was built in place of an older one in 1490. An arch runs through its square base, on which an octagonal tower stands with two sides flush to the square; it is this plan that gives it so firm and neat a look as we see it from the front, but from the other points the stair-turret at the back comes into view, altering its appearance a good deal. An excellent cornice with conspicuous mouldings completes the stone part of the tower, and on it rests the open gallery and airy spire, flanked by dainty spindle buttresses and pinnacles with a swarm of vanes. Within this wooden framework swings the great bell, and smaller bells hang outside. You feel as soon as you see the tower that it was all built for this bell, which is, as a matter of fact, eighty-four years older than the tower itself. Height was needed to allow the sound full play, and to give a wide view to the watchman who scanned the country round, and from hour to hour announced that all was quiet, or rang, if need were, the great bell to call the burgher soldiers to the ramparts. And strength was needed, too, for the rough times that the ancient town had so often to endure. There are plenty of bullet marks in the stone to remind us of one of the latest of those struggles

when Evreux was besieged for nearly a year during the Fronde.

Here, too, sounded the hour bell, the curfew, the festival bourdon, and the tocsin of fire. In the notes that vibrated through the stone walls lay all the history of the town, its common daily life, its joys, its tragedies.

The street of the belfry, the Rue de l'Horloge, takes us up to where the north transept of the Cathedral lies under the dear, crazy old spire of leaded wood. Look well at this transept: it is triumphant Gothic in all the boundless profusion of its pride. Bishop Ambroise le Veneur built it about the year 1515.

Did any one realise, as he watched the masons performing their miracles in stone, that the force of Gothic could no farther go, that this triumph was a veritable *Trionfo della Morte?*

Go now to the west front. The nephew and successor of Ambroise, Gabriel Le Veneur built it only thirty years after the north transept was finished. The Middle Age, which seemed almost to have conquered the law of gravitation in its soaring audacity, has entirely passed away: its art is in thirty years so utterly forgotten that the records of centuries have been wiped out as if in shame. The children of Clovis, in art at least, have set themselves again to burn what they had adored and to adore what they had burnt.

There is so much of this classical work in France that we English travellers soon cease to treat it with surprise. But generally it is tentative and playful in its first stages, overlapping with the old method, as at Gisors. Here only among French cathedrals we have a complete Renaissance *façade*; and here the break with the old is as sudden as a fault in the earth's strata.

It was begun thus, c. 1545, about the end of François Premier's reign. At Gisors we saw how that reign was the era of a free and capricious classicalism, very Gothic in its spirit: here at Evreux the Flamboyant north transept was being

built during the same period. Classicalism appears later, and in the solemn guise that marks the reign of Henri Deux. For it is from the monarchs and not from the people that the names of the styles are now obtained; such is the haughty pomp of the Renaissance, kingly and cold, as it continues down to the Revolution, surviving even that upheaval in the mimicry of Greek simplicity which has the name of "Empire."

So it was, then, that in the time of Henri II. they began to encase the old Norman west towers in a covering of classicalism. Each story of the southern tower is an order; first Doric, then Ionic, Corinthian, Composite, and an unfluted Ionic to finish with. Above is a quaint spire with a gallery and *abat-sons*. Then, when Henri IV. was raising the Bourbon dynasty out of the chaos of the religious wars, and just about the time of his first and most glorious victory (1590) at Ivry, which is quite close to Evreux, they built the doorway with its elegant shafts, and the rose-window where straight lines and circles are so curiously worked into a design that is in essence Gothic still. Later, in 1608, two years before Henri IV. was assassinated, the north tower (called le Gros-Pierre) was begun. It was finished about 1630; and thus belongs to what is called the Louis Treize style. It is coarser than what has gone before, and its orders have those great bands which mark a decline in the sense of structural fitness; but its cupola is stately and interesting.

The rest of the exterior has been ruined by an idiotic restoration which destroyed the fourteenth century flying buttresses to replace them by an incorrect imitation of the style of a hundred years earlier,—in order to secure uniformity!

Within the church, we have before us, as I have said, an almost perfect example of Gothic at the highest point of its development. For me to expatiate on the lightness and purity of this lofty nave and choir will not help you to see it, as you must for yourself. The old church was burnt in 1119 by Henry I. To the first rebuilding (*c.* 1125) belong the pier

arches: the triforium brings us to the middle of the thirteenth century (c. 1240); for the place had been ruined again in the wars of Philippe Auguste: the choir was built between 1298 and 1310, and belongs therefore to the Decorated period, with the exception of the triforium, which was rehandled in the fifteenth century. This triforium has a slight arcade before it, as if to emphasise its transparency, and is, as I have said, one of the best examples in France: its effect is enhanced by the beautiful glass, in which, among other figures, can be traced (in the fourth bay, north side) that of Charles le Mauvais, the King of Navarre, whose possession of Evreux brought such ruin upon the city. The effect of these windows, and of those of the chapels, can be well seen as you walk along the south choir aisle; here, too, you can note the high vaulting of aisles and choir, and the inward slope of the two first bays.

The Lady Chapel (like the south transept) belongs to the time of Louis XI. (1465), who was a great devotee of the Blessed Virgin. The work here becomes very free, and the shafts are mere swellings in the wall. But how lovely is the whole effect, and how exquisite those little figures of knights and angels in the *fleurs-de-lys* that form the tracery of the windows! On the south are knights in blue, on the north are knights in white; they represent the peers of France who took part in the coronation of Louis, and some have copes and mitres over their armour. Every petal of these flowers is like a gem, and the chapel is worthy of them.

If you stand now under the lofty lantern, which is lighted by two tiers of big windows and rests upon squinches, you can see the latest Gothic of all, the inside of that north transept which we saw as we came from the belfry. Its rose window is indeed like some great legendary rose of many-coloured petals: but the transept is incomplete; its empty niches leave a bare band of stone across the wall, and a hideous door blocks the space beneath.

The third thing which makes the cathedral of Evreux worth a pilgrimage is the beauty of its screens. They form so rare a collection of carved woodwork that you should study them one by one. Each chapel is enclosed, all round the church, by these screens, which are all of the same height, and yet hardly any are quite alike. On the south aisle of the nave we may notice the screen which shuts off the chapel of St. Anne, with its oak wreath, and the contrast of the heavy, severe one next to it; further west, two dainty angels draw our attention. Let us now go to the north side and begin with the first screen, going from west to east; for we shall appreciate them best if we take special note of a feature here and there. The first, then, has colonnettes with very delicate carving, and a Madonna in the medallion over the door; 2 has arabesques on its columns and open tracery in its panels; 3 is severe, with fluted columns; 4 is marked by its Gothic trefoils and narrow arches; 5 has well-proportioned balusters. We are now before the superb elaboration of the screen across the ambulatory, with its wreaths, and its telling decorative devices of a monstrance and a star.

Continuing in the north ambulatory, we find first a graceful Ionic arcade; at 2 we are back in Gothic times to revel in flame-like tracery, with open panels and charming little figures, and with beasts upon the lower portion; to this, 3 is a foil of Grecian restraint, and the next few are repetitions of its motive; 6 has classical columns and Gothic tracery; it is ornamented with teeming grotesques; on the panels are figures playing the horn and bagpipe, and Faith, Charity, Hope, Justice, Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude, with their attributes.

That before the Lady Chapel alone of the lateral screens has a cresting, which admirably suits its position; it has the flame-like tracery which we have already seen, especially over its door. Continuing round the ambulatory, now on the south, 1 has little figures like those on the other side, heads

beneath, carved moulding round the door, beasts on the finial; 2 was built by one of the Postel family, and their arms, a *posteau* with three trefoils, are on either side of a sculpture of Samson carrying off the *posteaux* of Gaza gate, whence an indignant Philistine looks out at him; the whole is given a sumptuous air by its big medallions containing heads very characteristic of the period; 3 is like 1, but with plenty of minor variations; 4 has the tapering balusters of the Postel screen, but in simpler form, and it has also a coloured relief of the Visitation over the door; 5 is a most interesting Treasury; an elaborately carved cupboard of marked originality, with locks and iron grilles, is enclosed, above as well as in front, by iron bars of great strength and simplicity; in front there projects a kind of counter, with slots for money, and over this is a wicket. The locks are beautiful ironwork, and contrast well with the solid wood and strong bars.

After all this we have hardly eyes left for the rood screen, and the parclose screens of the choir, which are yet particularly fine and flowing ironwork of the eighteenth century.

I had almost forgotten to mention the Bishop's Palace, a very fine example of late fifteenth century domestic architecture. You cannot go over it, but you can go through the door that is near the west front of the Cathedral, and peep in through the courtyard; and, better still, you can walk behind it along the Boulevard de Chambaudoin and look at its fortified side, and at the ample city moat which was the cause of that fortification.

The ancient Benedictine Abbey of St. Taurin grew up round the relics of the Saint, which were discovered in the seventh century by St. Landulphe, then Bishop of Evreux. The medieval abbey buildings are gone, and a clerical seminary now stands where once the Benedictines had a famous school. But the Church of St. Taurin remains; and if we walk straight up to its elegant choir (c. 1420), we can read the story of the saint in old painted glass. It is told in the three central lights; some modern glass has been inserted in the neigh-

bouring windows, in order that we may see how good the old is. At the top of the southern window Landulphe prays for guidance, and in the next compartment he disinters the body of St. Taurin. In the central light at the lowest division the legend of Taurin begins; an angel announces his birth, touching his mother with a stick which blossoms into a lily; next is the baptism of Taurin by St. Clement and St. Denys; above the baptism he is seen walking behind Bishop Denys to help him in the conversion of the Gauls; next is his consecration as first Bishop of Evreux; in the two top compartments are two events which come later in the history. In the northern window at the bottom we take up the story again; the saint is releasing the daughter of Lucius, his host, from a wiry red devil, who has made her throw herself into the fire; the result is shown in the next division and the one above it where Taurin is baptizing a large number of converts. Why the artist did not arrange his scenes in chronological sequence, I do not know, but we have now to go back to the top left-hand division of the central light for the next incident, the attack on the Temple of Diana; Taurin, encouraged by his successes, goes to the temple, asks the people if they would like to see their god, and calls upon the demon to come forth from the idol; he does so, and we can make out his black form, and an angel driving him forth. The priests of Diana were naturally indignant, and the result we see distinctly in the *southern* window, where the saint is being scourged. Next to this is the wife of Lucius, who is in bonds for the crime of being a Christian, but behind her a servant tells Lucius of the death of his son. In the middle left-hand compartment of the northern window I think I see the continuation of the story; for Taurin converted Lucius by restoring his son to life. In the compartment above the baptisms in this northern window an angel tells the saint of his approaching death, and in the next the saint dies, and his soul is carried up by angels. In the top right-hand

division of the central light is his burial, when he rose up in the tomb to bid farewell to his flock. There are two other old windows in this choir, that on the south representing the Assumption.

All this we are free to examine for ourselves if we go reverently into the choir. But to see the great *châsse* or reliquary of St. Taurin we must get hold of the sacristan. It is kept in the excellent panelled sacristy, and is a triumph of twelfth century work—the best, it is said, in France. It is of silver gilt, but has gone through trouble, and the gems that now adorn it are magnificent, but they are not gems. At the Revolution it was thrown into a barn, with the result that the central finial and the other pine-cones that adorn it and the smaller statuettes are modern work of the 'thirties. Still it is almost unspoilt; the cloisonné enamel has survived; the pinnacles, the intricate ornamentation, the principal figures are intact, and excellent goldsmiths' work they are. The figure of the saint, whose relics are within, is in the middle panel, and gives a better idea of how a medieval bishop was dressed than we can generally get. On the right is a fresh incident from the saint's legend, how he was met by the fiend at the gate of Evreux when he came to preach there, and on the right he is represented triumphantly preaching.

If you have gone very quickly to read the story of St. Taurin, you may not have noticed what extraordinary tricks the monks of the Renaissance played with their twelfth century church. There are the manifest Norman arches; and there, sure enough, is a Norman triforium on the south side of the nave, unmistakable, irrepressible, although some restless genius has neatly carved cupids' heads on the sober little capitals, and has patched, but not at all neatly, a small classical arcade along the lower part of the gallery. And the vault does not fit anywhere; and having partly reshaped the southern wall, they cut out great swollen corbels and covered them with ugly grotesques. And then a queer cornice has been attempted on the last pier;

and in the transepts is a similar jumble, with a curious gallery that skips round the corners of the south transept, where three gorgeous prelates reign in the stained glass. So did the severity of the earlier monks give place to license even in stone. And thus we leave St. Taurin where they did their good work, went through their decadence, and then departed.

We leave Evreux by the wooded valley of the Iton, and after a ride of nine miles arrive at Conches, stranded high and dry

Fortified farm near Conches.

from the Middle Ages on its own hillock, with its own church, and ruined castle, and municipal park, and *hôtel-de-ville*. It is fast asleep in the mid-day sun; and we may walk right into the chancel of St. Foy's church without meeting a soul.

Although the fanciful have imagined that Conches owes its name to the shell-like disposition of the hills that surround it, a town in Spain called Conques seems really to have been its original. In the early part of the eleventh century Roger I., the lord of Douville (as this place was then called), went to fight the Moors in Spain. There he heard of Saint Foy, a child saint of the fourth century, whose tomb at Conques was the scene of many miracles and much pilgrimage. He brought back some of St. Foy's relics, built over them a church in her

honour, changed the name of the town to Conches, and gave it three shells for escutcheon.

More than a century later, Roger III. built the castle. The mortar was scarcely hard before Philippe Auguste, who was just then avenging himself on Richard I, laid siege to it: "*Doneques Auguste*," says an old writer, "*tout transporté de colère et plein de mauvaises volontez, porte tout incontinent ses armes contre le château de Conches, et le prit après quelques attaques.*"

It was at the end of the fifteenth century that the adventurous Roger's church was rebuilt; a hundred years later it was still being adorned and enlarged, when the Leaguers put a stop to all such pleasant things at the siege of 1590. The last misfortune of Conches happened in 1842, when the *flèche* had been in the restorer's hands for a year: just as the scaffolding was ready to be cleared away, a terrific storm brought spire and scaffold crashing to the ground; it tore up the roof, smashed pinnacles and buttresses, and destroyed a house that stood against the church.

And now that we are in the church, you can see at once that we have come there for the painted glass. There it is, unmistakable in the choir, a superb enamel of colour, and there it is, too, on either side of us as we go up through the nave. The glass is indeed so good that we will take superlatives for granted, and show our respect by following its meaning, which is indeed of exceptional interest. It is very intellectual glass.

Let us leave the choir for a moment to remain for us a mere mass of colour, and follow the windows on either side. They deal with two subjects, the Blessed Virgin on the north and the Holy Eucharist on the south side. We will take first the Lady Chapel, where the weak frivolity of the modern ornaments is in such piteous contrast to the restrained intensity of feeling in the beautiful allegory of the glass. It represents Mary as the helper of mankind: in the centre she sits in quiet dignity with her Child; below her is the ecclesiastical hierarchy, flanked by

groups of men and of women, all imploring her protection; in the tracery are the disasters from which men pray to be delivered,—an imperilled ship in the uppermost light, then war, fire, sickness. In the next window is the Nativity, and I mark specially a little picture of the Annunciation in the upper light with a red-winged Gabriel in a drifting purple robe. In the next window, of noticeable white and blue, our Lady stands surrounded by her attributes, *Hortus Inclusus*, the Garden enclosed, *Civitas Dei* and the rest. The next, the Annunciation, has been restored. The fifth window, dated 1553, is a Triumph of the Virgin: she comes in a chariot from the "Palais Virginal" towards the "Temple d'Honneur": under her chariot wheels is a monster, Vice; at its side are captive ladies and a bound cupid; in the crowd that precedes her we can distinguish the cardinal and theological virtues (the jug of Temperance and the mirror of Prudence are conspicuous). In the "Palais de Jesse," that ancestor points her out to the twelve kings her sires, "*et leur dit*," says the quaint inscription, "*nobles roys, veyla de Dieu l'ancelle.*" In the upper lights is the Apocalyptic vision of the Woman and the Dragon. The Presentation comes next, with everybody gesticulating like a picture by Rubens. And the last (dated 1552) contains three figures sumptuous with gold; our Lady herself in the midst, St. Adrian as a splendid young squire on her right (he was a young Roman noble), and St. Romain with the captive "gargoyle" (ch. XI) on her left.

The Eucharistic subjects on the south side begin with the second window, the first (at the east end of the chapel) representing SS. Peter, Anthony, Michael, and Sebastian. The second window symbolises the glory of the Sacrament: in the midst of a triumphal arch our Lord is represented with the Host; in the four niches are the Evangelists, each with an appropriate quotation from his gospel. The donors kneel, in black velvet and brown sable. Next is the Last Supper; at the foot the donor is by a strange whim represented dead, while his widow kneels with an open book and a rosary. How

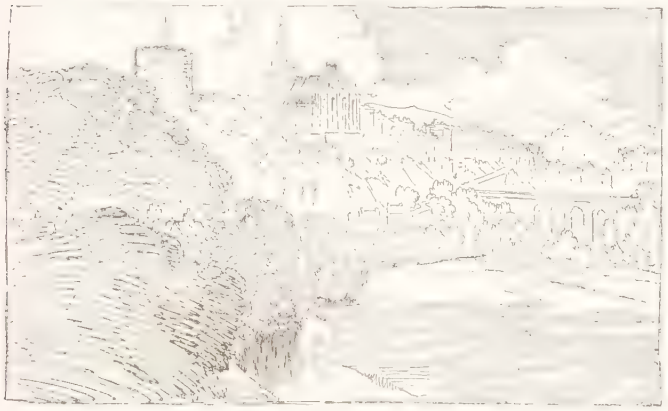
effective is her black dress, and how fine the big flowers—daffodils, flags, and red anemones! The fourth window gives a stately allegory, the mystical Winepress: Christ is treading out the grapes, and the donor, Jean le Tellier, *conseiller du Roi*, is stretching out a cup for the wine as it runs into the vat. Next is the Manna, type of the heavenly bread. The next is new, replacing one that was destroyed when the spire fell. The last does not belong to the series, and is more ancient than the glass we have been studying, which all dates from the middle of the sixteenth century.

We could not go away from Conches without studying the seven windows of the choir; for it gives us the history of St. Faith or Foy, to whom the place owes its very name. The upper half of these windows contains scenes from the life of our Lord (copied in part from Dürer) which are easily recognised. The lower half gives us the legend of the patroness. It begins in the north light, and runs from the middle downwards, as follows: (1st light) Birth of St. Foy: she stands (in the yellow dress which distinguishes her) at school before the master: she preaches to the people. (2nd) The proconsul Dacian tries to turn her to paganism, but her mother points heavenward: she refuses to sacrifice to the gods, and in the background she is scourged. (3rd) She is tortured; at her prayer the temple falls upon the idolaters (below this is a beautiful St. Louis). (Centre light) She is burnt on a gridiron, a dove brings her a heavenly crown, St. Caprais or Caprasius confesses his faith at the sight of her constancy; she is in a cauldron. (South side, 5th light) She refuses again to sacrifice; St. Caprais is tortured; her head is struck off—an imposing picture (under it are St. Michael and St. Bernard before our Lady). (6th) Her mother (in a blue dress) looks at her body; her body is tied up in a shroud; in the background cripples are coming up to be healed. (7th) Her mother dies by her bier, and pilgrims pray round her reliquary.

Such is the legend that so touched the rough heart of the

lord of Conches in the eleventh century. The Norman conquerors soon brought the story of St. Faith into England; her name remains in the Prayer Book calendar, and English churches are still dedicated in her honour.

From the terrace on the south of the church we can look up at the cresting of the chancel roof, which is its particular



Conches.

beauty; and, leaning over the old stone parapet, which seems to have come here from the top of some church wall, we can look at the green valley that lies so peacefully among its hills. On our right, a short lane will take us past a garden of hollyhocks to a little public garden where the small donjon still nods its battered old head over the town to which it once gave the dignity of a title. It seems to be dreaming of the many sieges it has endured and the many times it has changed its occupants; for English and French followed each other like the scenes of a play during the Hundred Years War; nor was it till the Huguenots of Evreux came over in 1590 and took it that it fell into decay, adding one more to the strong places of medieval Normandy that have passed into the charge of those last tenants, the owl and the ivy, which alone keep what

they take and surrender to no foe. A short walk through the beech hedges of a winding path leads us from the moat to the keep with its torn mantle of turrets. All is so still in the afternoon sun that the baying of a dog in the fields below is almost startling. The days when these walls were terrible seem so infinitely far off, and yet how slight are the changes of three centuries! The face of the country is the same, and men still worship across there in the church of St. Foy as they did before the Huguenots had ever broken up this solid monument of civil strife.

The road that takes us over the twelve miles from Conches to Beaumont-le-Roger is a byway, that is to say, it is not a *route départmentale*, but it is none the less *bien entretenue*, which is the great thing. It runs through cornfields, and one refreshing wood, and down a long avenue of beech trees, whose trunks are a deep blue in the light of a summer evening. A little further on, we drop down a hill into the village of Beaumont-le-Roger, one of the sweetest places in Normandy. It is pleasanter, as it is certainly cheaper, to stay in little country towns; and if we stop here at the old-fashioned Hôtel de Paris (or elsewhere, for aught that I know) we shall be more comfortable than at many smart houses. This is just one of those places where one could spend a whole summer holiday. It is a good point, too, from which to visit Bec (ch. X).

Beaumont's great charm lies first in its position among the woods and low-lying hills, on the bank of the Risle, whose subordinates meander here and there among the houses, and next in its picturesque aspect. Conches is no longer what it was not many years ago; but Beaumont is almost unspoilt. It is precious. Alas! that within a few years such places in Normandy should have become, not only precious, but rare! Its inhabitants are content to let it remain as it was in old times; and I think they must have learnt by now that they were wise, for the contents of the shop-windows, and the flowery gardens which one sees, show that well-to-do people like to

come and live about here. Also, there are two chemists' shops, which is a sign. We may notice here, once and for all, how superior are the French apothecaries' temples, with their circular sweep of pretty little pillars, to our own sanctuaries of the flaring bottle.

If you want to realise what a devilish thing restoration is, sit outside a café, and imagine what the church of St. Nicholas

Beaumont-le-Roger.

would be like if it were restored. It has grown up quite naturally to be what it is, irregular and unfinished, with an abortive tower, and a huge chancel patched anyhow on to the russet roof of the nave ; quaint houses, too, lean familiarly up against it, which they oughtn't to do. But who could remove them now, or break up the record of history with rule and plummet? There is the tower and the porch, their crockets like jets of water, and there is the carved door which neglect has not spoilt. And there, high up on the tower, is Regulus, of whom the village is so proud. Regulus who, in spite of his martial accoutrements, has naught to do but signal the passing hours. And under him—delightful touch!—an electric lamp lights up

the face of the clock. I think electric light is one of the few modern inventions which the old dead artistic races would have seized upon with joy.

There are now three bells in the tower, of which only one (his name is *Lazare*) is ancient. There was once a fine peal of seven, which rang out so joyfully when Henri IV. came to Beaumont that the lusty monarch exclaimed, "*O les jolies cloches! J'aurais moult joye à les oüir chaque matin.* I must take them with me to Paris, my great town."

But the bells were saved by the presence of mind of one citizen, who replied, "Sire, must we carry off for you also our hills and our echoes of Beaumont? *Car sans iceux, il n'y auroit pas de sy belle sonnerie!*"

The King smiled, and spoke no more of transporting the bells. But when the People became King at the Revolution, there were no such scruples. Six of the bells were melted down to make other music—

"Vive le son
Du canon!"

As we go up to the door we notice the disused dial of the time of Henri II., and the incised slab which covered the tomb of Jehan du Moustier, one of Charles le Mauvais' captains, but not the founder of the church, as the modern inscription doth falsely boast. Inside the church we notice that the restorer has not yet come to sweep away the old pews and replace them by those chairs which in France (even in the cathedrals) are as bad a tyranny of particularism as ever the pew system was in England. Across the nave are stretched queer arches, which add to the effect of height in the choir behind, where classical architecture lays itself out so blithely to do Gothic work, and gives us a free tracery in which even the initials of the patron, St. Nicholas, find a place. The people here are proud of their high choir, and, comparing it with the ruined church of the suburb of Vieilles, and with Beaumontel, a little further off, they say, "*Avec le clocher de*

Beaumontel, la nef de Vieilles, et le choeur de Beaumont, on ferait une petite cathédrale." They might have added that with the north chapel of Beaumont one could make a pagan temple; for there on the vault is a small pantheon, Diana (in spite of all St. Taurin's efforts), and Ceres, and Chronos, and all the deities of heathendom. One is bound to say, in defence, that the inhabitants of Beaumont can only practice idolatry at the cost of a severe crick in the neck.

A little farther west, passing the high-roofed brick house of the Ducs de Bouillon, we arrive at the gate of the Abbey, which came to be to Beaumont what its fortress was to Conches. There was, indeed, once a fortress here too. Roger de Vetulis (of Vieilles), a great man in Norman times, whose son went over with the Conqueror, built a castle on the top of the Beau Mont from which he took, and to which he gave, his name. There are still some traces of this castle on the hill, and a great fosse which he dug for its protection. But the lords of Beaumont came to be great folk in England, and it was to the abbey which they founded that Beaumont owed its prosperity.

In 1250 we find the Archbishop of Rouen complaining on a visitation that there should be twelve monks in the abbey, while there were only nine; also that the monks eat meat three times a week, and were in the habit of talking to lay folk in the cloisters. The Archbishop reminded them of their rules; but eight years later he found only five monks, and these eat meat at least twice a week; and so the monks continued, few in number and carnivorous in their habits. Just three centuries later, we discover the subject of food still engaging much attention, and now the Prior has only four monks under him: this was in 1580, when the monks quarrelled about their rations, and the Prior of Bec issued an arbitration. He allowed them for dinner seven pounds of good beef, besides the *pièce de mouton ordinaire*. Seven pounds of beef, with mutton thrown in, was not bad for "*quatre relligieux*." At supper they had to content themselves with a leg of mutton roasted and a boiled

neck of mutton. Each day their allowance of bread was two pounds and a half, with two large pots of wine. On feast days pigeons and capons were thrown in. In Lent they fasted on cod, salted salmon, and fresh fish; and for supper they confined themselves to *ung hareng rosty avec un plat de pruneaux*. Perhaps the numbers would have kept up better under a vegetarian regimen.

By the eighteenth century the four religious had been replaced by two secular priests. At the beginning of the nineteenth the whole building woke up as a ribbon factory. In 1855 this factory was burnt down, and the church, which had escaped the flames, was offered to the local authorities for 7,000 francs, but these wretches refused the offer, and an incredible person bought the church for building materials: he was not stopped till the best part had been destroyed.

Why should such magnificent buildings go to ruin? We in England attribute it all to the Reformation; but in France where the Reformation failed, "abbey" is almost as synonymous with "ruin" as in England. Monasticism in its palatial medieval form is dead, there as here; for the Revolution did in an instant what two centuries before the Reformation failed to do. There are indeed, still thousands of people in religious orders, the *Frères Chrétiens*, for instance, whom every traveller notices by the white bands that distinguish them from the clergy: they are a most devoted body of men, and their educational work is astonishingly successful. The older orders, too, still have power, and here in Normandy itself flourishes the remarkable monastery of La Trappe, whose mystical and pure spirit has so impressed M. Huysmans. Yet the old splendid abbeys are empty, here as at home; even the nuns, who do an enormous amount of work, have given up stone for brick. Once they were teeming with life, they seemed an essential part of a Christian nation; then in England they died a violent, and in France almost a natural, death. Could nothing have been done with the buildings they left? Are there no classes of men, of poor

men at least, who would gladly have rested on such a peaceful hill as this, ending their days in such a palace of common and yet private life, not ungrateful either for the comfort of its hallowed church? It is too late now to do more than lament; for private greed and public stupidity have wasted much of mankind's best work, here as in England.

The ruins of the Abbaye de Beaumont are too piteous, too disfigured, almost, for a visit. It is the entrance where the road branches up under the gateway into a splendid gallery that once was vaulted, it is this that we have mainly come to see; and the great wall along the road-side where ancient black and white houses nestle so prettily between the huge buttresses. Here again, it is all so picturesque because it is so natural: the site had to be arranged in terraces, and the gateway could only give convenient admittance by being alongside the road.

An orchard occupies the ground where most of the monastic buildings stood: on its left is an elaborate series of caves cut in the chalk and faced with stone arches; in the first of them is a well. The exigences of space allowed the church only a partial orientation, and its direction is SSE. Its ruins lie amid a tangle of undergrowth, and a fragment of brick chimney along its naked gable alone proclaims the factory of ribbons.

The road by the Abbey takes us in a few minutes to Beaumontel, which has a distinguished tower with a dumpy crocketed stone spire and a modern St. Peter in lead on top, all of which we can see from the road. There is nothing much within the church. At Serquigny we leave the Risle to follow the Charentonne; and here, at Serquigny church, we pass a Norman doorway, chevronned and billeted as befits it. Within, if you have time and do not believe me, there is a *cartouche* of Diana hunting in the north chapel. The waggon roof is good, but you will see better at Bernay; and we have had such a feast of painted glass that perhaps you have no appetite for the three sixteenth century windows,—the Crucifixion with the Emperor Henry and Margaret, the Three Maries,

and the Resurrection, the appearance to the Magdalen and the Ascension.

All the twelve miles from Beaumont to Bernay are ideal riding, by clear rivers, past many flourishing water-mills, and between hedges where the wild marjoram and angelica flourish,

Beaumont-le-Roger: Entrance to the Abbey.

while now and again hidden meadow-sweet throws up gusts of scent.

Bernay lies in the midst of all this country, and if there were a garden where the Gare is, it might be worthy of its surroundings. But somehow it manages to be a slightly depressing place, even down to its people and its sad hotels; so it may be best to run on for another twenty miles to Lisieux for the night. It is pleasant riding in these summer evenings, and without being guilty overmuch of tourism (if I may be allowed the word), you can, I think, see the three churches in about an hour. They will fall to you in this order: first, in the High Street, Ste. Croix on your left, then turning to your left by the

Hôtel-de-Ville to the old Abbey Church, then across the railway by the station for a quarter of a mile to Notre-Dame de la Couture. There are also old houses at Bernay; but are we not on the road to Lisieux, the paradise of old houses?

Ste. Croix impresses one first and last by its broad and open proportions, especially at the crossing, which is in exact contrast with the high and narrow tower of Evreux. This feature is well set off by the fine waggon ceiling that is characteristic of the churches of Bernay and of Serquigny. Folk who are interested in architecture will also notice the plain moulded caps at the crossing, which are distinctly English in character, while those on the windows of the north aisle of the nave are made up of a series of mouldings as if they had been turned on the lathe, which suggests that the mason was copying the English method from memory. I suppose what most people notice in Ste. Croix is the carved Nativity over the altar; it looks at first sight as if it were all in marble, but only the figure of the Holy Child is in this material, that of St. Joseph is in wood, that of Mary in terra-cotta. People rave about the little marble figure, quite unnecessarily in my opinion. The whole group is immensely inappropriate to its position. The semicircular range of columns that holds a sort of stone crown over the long altar is of interest as coming from the abbey of Bec; its date is 1683. The wooden Rood and the two statues of St. Benedict and St. Maur (the reformer of the Benedictine order in the seventeenth century) are also from Bec, where they all belonged to the rood-loft. So are the incised slabs of various abbots of Bec, one of which has been restored in colour, not very correctly. But the best things here are the large stone statues of the apostles and evangelists, which are fourteenth century work. They are stern, imposing, and full of character.

The abbey of Bernay, which was founded by Judith, the Conqueror's grandmother, in 1013, was fortified from early

times. In 1343 it passed into the hands of Charles le Mauvais, who built a new fortress within the monastic enclosure. A little later Charles's secretary, Du Tertre, was besieged here by the royal army. The siege went on through Holy Week; on Good Friday it was suspended; at sunrise on Holy Saturday the engines got to work again, and Easter Day closed amid the shock of assault. On Easter Monday Du Tertre left the fortress to arrange terms of capitulation; he had told his wife to burn all his correspondence with Charles, but the lady was accidentally shut out, and when the royal army entered the fortress they discovered all the letters and the key to the cipher in which they were written. In the sixteenth century the Huguenots under Coligny took Bernay, sacked the town, slaughtered some of the clergy, and burnt the abbey. But the church survived everything till the advent of the fatal nineteenth century, when it became what it is. Freeman tells us that in 1861 he talked with one who remembered it in the full extent of its choir and Lady Chapel; thirty years after he discovered that a Roman shaft (one of the very few north of the Loire) had disappeared, and one later, but still early, capital had been knocked away to make a convenient resting place for a wooden beam.

The casual visitor may not be much struck by this abbey church, or what remains visible of it, but to the antiquary it is most valuable as an example of exceedingly early Norman work; for the nave dates from between 1014 and 1040. If it were only used as a *Halle au Blé*, we should be able also to see the choir and transepts, which belong to the second half of the eleventh century; but its eastern part is cut up into sheds and shops and living-rooms, and a woman who was picturesquely carding wool in the middle of the nave told me that the barn-like structure in the choir is a *salle de musique*. Nor did the later ecclesiastical occupants show much more appreciation of its historical value. They carved cupids and festoons on its Romanesque capitals in a manner well calcu-

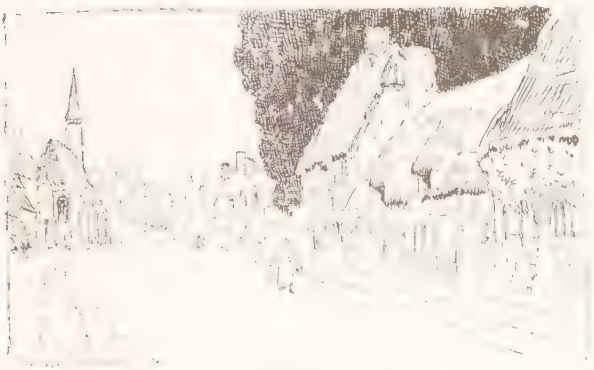
lated to deceive the unwary. In the lower part of these capitals can be seen the Norman work, and in one there are two rows of elaborate Norman sculpture below the classical. The curious thing is that the Norman ornament is itself a later addition ; thus we have the story of three periods in the piers, two races of decorators setting themselves to bring the primitive work up to date, and both working in a form of Roman art, the one before the advent of the Gothic style, the other after its disappearance. A similar thing has happened in the aisles, where the vaulting has often been mistaken for Norman work and yet really belongs to the seventeenth, or at the very earliest to the sixteenth century. The spacious severity of the original building comes home to us in the high pier-arches of the nave. Yet even here, even in the piers themselves, one has to distinguish, as I have said, between the early and later work ; the simple square piers do indeed belong to the precious years 1015—1040, but the half-columns were added to them some fifty years later, and so of course were the round archivolts which they support. These additions have no structural value, and it seems a pity that the men of the second half of the eleventh century were not content with building the tower, transepts, and choir. The upper parts of the nave, again, are early twelfth century. The triforium arcades that were grouped over each arch have been walled up, but the shallow recesses between them remain, and are unique in that they are set immediately over the piers and thus weaken the wall (if anything can be said to weaken a Romanesque wall) at the point where it needs most strength. The north side was rehandled in the fifteenth century. Part of the abbey buildings (c. 1690) are now the Hôtel-de-Ville, and the abbot's house has become a museum.

Tradition tells that some shepherds long ago, before even the abbey was built, noticed a sheep scratching in the ground outside Bernay, and following up the animal's investigation discovered a statue of the Blessed Virgin. Thereupon a chapel

arose, and a hermit came to live there, and ever since the place —Notre-Dame de la Couture –has been frequented by pilgrims. From these good pilgrims the church has suffered artistically within ; but outside it is a fine building. Notice especially the spire of the western tower, with its four pinnacles, the oriels on its gaping *abat-sons*, and the pretty leaden decoration of its finial, and also the minaret-like stair turret on the north of the façade with its saucy covering.

There is a vaulted passage under the choir, where, in utter darkness, stands a little image of our Lady which (in spite of the obvious anachronism of its style) is popularly thought to be that which the sheep discovered. The church is entered from the west down a flight of steps ; another peculiarity is its broad transepts, which were so made by roofs being spread over them large enough to include their lateral chapels ; the partition walls thus left were at the restoration replaced by arcades. Forty-six out of the sixty-four choir stalls are by the du Moulin, two carpenters of Bernay, the father and brother of Gabriel du Moulin who was the seventeenth century historian of Normandy. The scutcheons on these stalls show that they were not for the clergy only, but for gentle-folk and burgesses as well, like so many old-fashioned choirs in England, though the arrangement was never common in France. There is some old glass, the most curious being that over the high altar which illustrates the Prayer of St. Augustine—*Sancta Maria succurre miseris juva pusillanimes, refove flebiles.* The Bishop of Lisieux is presenting poor folk and cripples to the Virgin, who sits in the midst ; on the other side, the figures illustrate the remaining petitions—*Ora pro populo,* which is twice repeated, as is also *interveni pro clero, pro clero,* under figures of a cardinal, a pope, a bishop, and doctors, while beyond are figures of women with *intercede pro devoto femineo sexu.* In a chapel on the south of the choir there is an unmistakable Apollo disguised as St. Sebastian, the saint who gave to the great Italian painters their opportunity for treating the nude figure of a youth.

From Bernay we come in a few miles on to a real highway, an unmistakable *Route Nationale*, with its rows of trees, and its unflinching straightness, broken only by the dear little village of Thiberville, which, being already in possession, I suppose, had to be considered when the military road was made.



Thiberville.

Falaise Castle.

CHAPTER IV

LISIEUX, ST. PIERRE-SUR-DIVES, FALAISE, ARGENTAN, ECOUCHÉ, RANES, LA FERTÉ-MACÉ, BAGNOLES.

Lisieux, prosperous and pretty, full of ancient houses and modern factories, has a long history. In the time of Julius Cæsar it was a walled city, and the tribe of the Lexovii are several times mentioned by him. It was destroyed by the barbarians in the fourth century, but in the sixth we find it one of the most flourishing towns of Neustria, and the seat of a bishopric. The worst siege it ever had to endure was in 1135 when Geoffrey Plantagenet laid siege to it, and so horrible was the famine that human flesh was publicly sold in the Lieuvin. To drive back the enemy, Alain de Dinan, who commanded the garrison, burnt down the city and the cathedral with it. Thus it was that, when peace was secured, the present church was commenced. Since the Concordat at the end of the last century, it has ceased to be a cathedral see, and is now only known as the Church of St. Pierre. But the change in its status has not lessened its real dignity, and it remains worthy of great honour as (with Sens) the first Gothic church that was built in France.

Outside it the Place Thiers is thronged with country folk of a Saturday, when the weekly market is held. We realise, perhaps for the first time, that we are indeed in Normandy, so different are these people to the genuine Frenchmen, who seem to have swamped the Norman race in the eastern parts of the province. Here we feel at home among our kinsfolk, men of no Latin race, but the peaceable descendants of fair-haired Scandinavian pirates. A little further north, in Picardy, we find the people with open faces, very talkative; here they are silent, using *Monsieur* and *Madame* much less than we are used to, and so giving an impression at first of rudeness; they are robust, often fair, with *la tête carée* and a shrewd eye. The very fashions of the older men, with their side whiskers and odd black peaked caps, give them the look of an English country parson out for a holiday. The women, perhaps, are more French-looking, some of them have driven long distances with no covering for their heads but their hair brushed smoothly back from their foreheads, others wear a sort of turban suggestive of the undress covering that men wore in the era of wigs, others have a tight kind of nightcap, while the smarter ones set off their brown faces with a frilled cap and strings. And thus they do their business in the crowded market place, with chicken and rabbits and vegetables and fruit, peasants selling their own produce, not farmers dealing in the labour of others. It is remarkable as we travel among the small fields of Normandy to notice the comparative absence of mechanical implements. These rivals of ours who beat us in our own market do so with the simplest tools, for ownership is more potent than machinery. They often cut the corn by hand in the old way, since they cannot afford costly implements for their small strips of land; yet there is no "agricultural problem" for these shrewd, thrifty, and laborious peasant proprietors.

From this busy centre of country life we can look up at the towers of St. Pierre. That on the north, with the long

belfry windows, belongs to the original scheme; that on the south is of rough sixteenth century work, and its spire with such strange pinnacles is of the seventeenth century. As we get nearer, we see that the central doorway has been mutilated and the window over it altered, while the side porches are exceedingly graceful and original through all the hardness which some restorer has lent them.

Within, we have before us a remarkable example of the beginnings of Gothic: if we put on one side the chapels, all that we see was built between 1143 and 1215, and is either Transitional or Early French, belonging to one or other of the stages of the first style of Gothic. To be more exact: the nave, transepts, and part of the choir were built during the forty years' episcopate of Bishop Arnulf (1143—1182), and are therefore Transitional; but the clerestory was added later, probably by Bishop Jordan (1197—1214), who also built the eastern part of the choir, with its apse. We have thus a unity of effect that is none too common; the sober massive pillars are the same all over the church, some of their capitals are of what I may call the artichoke description, some retain still the acanthus leaves which so many centuries had consecrated to architectural use. The simple round moulding of the period abounds everywhere; and, as we sit and look across the transepts at the same unvaried moulding that fits itself into such variety of lines and curves, and strikes so full a note of harmony with the slender shafts, we may ask ourselves whether the decline of Gothic art did not begin when that moulding was dropped. There is certainly enough variety here within the unity of the style; for the transepts are strangely dissimilar, even the lancets differ in north and south, and the triforium arches are at varying levels and of diverse designs—mere suggestions and not galleries. The lantern above our heads is a little later and more finished; the apse shows clearly what the architects had learnt in thirty years; its piers are double, one behind another, so as to look as light as possible from the

Lisieux.

west, its vaulting-shafts are slender, and its vault leaves deep and narrow spaces that are full of shadow.

The Lady Chapel is said to have been built by Cauchon, the infamous bishop (first of Beauvais, then of Lisieux) who presided at the condemnation of Jeanne d'Arc. It in no way reflects his character; indeed, if it has a fault at all, that fault lies in a certain upright austerity.

To imagine what the church was originally, we have not only to remove the rows of fourteenth century chapels, and to efface (as always) the sham Gothic high altar, but we must also set the nave lower than the choir, for it was not till 1667 that some unconscionable persons made the level uniform throughout. We must also always remember that the love for a "vista" from end to end of a church has entirely altered the effect aimed at by the old builders. Our English cathedrals generally retain the rood-screen, just as they retain the old low altar; but Roman Catholics began some time ago to sweep away their screens, which are now extremely rare.

You can see here in St. Pierre where the shafts were corbelled off for the screen to stand underneath, and in the Lady Chapel there are two restored panels of the Crucifixion and Resurrection, which once belonged to the fourteenth century rood-screen. In the church of St. Jacques, the doors that led on to the rood-loft can be seen, and only the upper one has been blocked up.

If we go out by the south porch into the Rue du Paradis (a name that recalls the origin of the word "parvise" now given to our English porches, but still used in France for the church-yard), we can see again how these Early French artists, having discarded the elaborate sculpture of the Normans, and not having yet lost the love of their newly-found simplicity, sought their finish in the arrangement of parts instead of the decoration of them. In spite of the enormous buttresses that partly block the transept, it is full of a charming grace, and its three arcades bear further witness to the inventive power of

St. Jacques, Lisieux.

the artist. A peculiarity about it is its want of symmetry, which a reference to the central point of the doorway will show at once.

We can have a last view of St. Pierre by turning up the Rue Olivier on the east of the Rue du Paradis, whence from high ground we can see the chapels and transepts, and note the obvious join of the apse and choir.

If we follow this street across the Grande Rue, we come to the church of St. Jacques, which has this peculiarity, that the slope on which it is built has not been cut away inside, so that you walk slightly uphill from the west door to the choir. It was built between 1496 and 1540, and has none of the eccen-

tricities which were in vogue at this period; but it is not very interesting in its plainness. The painted decorations on the ceiling are in excellent preservation (thanks to some friendly coats of whitewash, now removed), and one of them bears the date 1552. The window over the pulpit contains a curious picture of the Apocalyptic Harlot, and that in the second chapel on the south side gives the legend of St. James, whose scallop-shells appear in the parapet.

The English come much to Lisieux; and they come, I suppose, mainly for the old timber houses. There are about sixty such that have a real interest, and there is hardly another town in France with so many. I had hoped to begin with one that stood in the Rue du Paradis, and had a peculiar charm for me because of its splendid iron grating and general originality. But, alas! it is gone, and in its place the bricklayers are hard at work after their wont. I had thought that this one might have been spared, and I am full of gall against the unknown who has done this. And yet, I suppose, we have no right to complain. Worse things are done in England. And who are we, my fellow highwaymen and bywaymen, that this enterprising shopman of Lisieux should court ruin and typhoid to satisfy the lust of our eyes? These lovable old houses will drop off, like veterans, one by one, and perhaps when you come here others will have fallen into the dust of the past. There is only one remedy, and that is to build other houses as good. Alas!

The principal old houses that remain can be seen in a walk from the Rue du Paradis along the Rue des Boucheries (which is a continuation of it) till we turn to the left down the famous Rue aux Fèvres. In the Rue des Boucheries there are many good houses, for example, 22 and 40, both stately examples, with narrow red bricks arranged diagonally between the wood-work: opposite No. 40 there is a good specimen of the great barn-like room in the roof. Down most of the passages we shall find quaint tumble-down groups of houses, and bits of carved work here and there.

In the Rue aux Fèvres we seem to be back in the middle ages; old houses nod across the narrow street to each other, and children in their black blouses run in and out of the dark recesses. But how fallen is the street from its former glories! Old towns, with all their beauty, were doubtless not very clean; but the Rue aux Fèvres was not the filthy crumbled place it is now, in the days when well-to-do burgesses lived in it and swept its doorways with their costly gowns.

The *Manoir de François I.* (No. 19), for instance, must have belonged to a rich man who could spend money on its fanciful carvings, though it has nothing to do with the King, except that it belongs to his time. It bears the royal badge of the salamander among the monkeys and beasts and men which cover all its beams, and is therefore sometimes called *la Salamandre.* There is an *accolade* over each of the windows of its first story, and the curious windows of the second are crowned by a very bold dormer in the roof.

As I write, it bears a notice that it is to let. To let! Who, I wonder, will be the next person to share its shelter with the rats! If some one does not take pity on it soon, there will be nothing left to inhabit, for even its tough old beams are crazy with despair, and long neglect has touched it with mortal infirmity. I cannot hope that the authorities will step in to its rescue, for their kindness would be more cruel than all the brutality of slumdom. And yet it would be a great boon to the curious traveller if he could walk straight in and explore it, as I did.

And what I found was that its rooms are much larger than you would expect from the outside. They are, indeed, horribly dilapidated, and the winding staircase has such eccentric deviations from the primal law of the universe that I felt giddy and almost sea-sick. It seemed as if the whole place would fall on my head like a pack of cards unless I walked delicately. Yet the rooms retain their red-tiled flooring, and a little carved work has survived. They are still beautiful, and I could wish

No. 33 Rue Aux Fèves.

for nothing better to live in. If I were an American I think I would buy *la Salamandre* outright, and take it across the Atlantic with me.

When I set it up again, though, I would choose a more open site; for never did I realise before how the opposite neighbours in these old overhanging streets looked right into each others'

rooms. They must have had good consciences in the middle ages, or thick curtains, or perhaps only thick skins.

Further down the street is No. 33, alongside the stream ; and this is a real old house, not a creation of the age of François I., when modern times were beginning, but a house that has stood there since the thirteenth century. It is quite plain

St. Pierre-sur-Dives.

under its high and weighty gable, and has a very low ground floor, but its first floor is roomy enough. Do not forget to admire it, although you find no photographers at work upon it.

Before you leave Lisieux you may well stroll further about. There is a charming court-yard belonging to the Sisters of la Miséricorde in the Place Hennuyer, where the castle-like stone house is part of an older convent. Another beautiful court-yard is at 87 Grande Rue ; and 47 Grande Rue is a late fifteenth century house. And I had almost forgotten the *ci-devant* Bishop's Palace next to the cathedral, with the quaint arrangement of pediments and windows in its Louis-Treize façade.

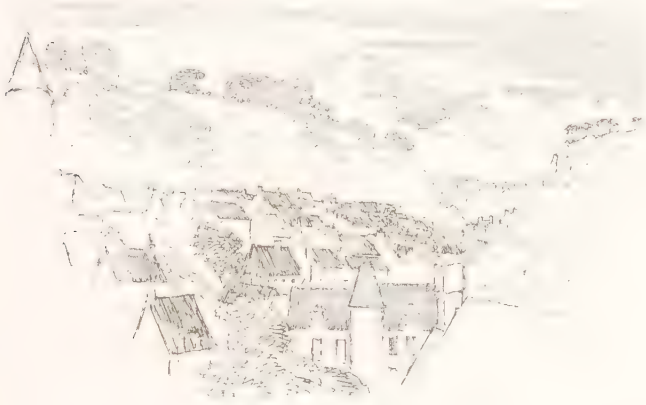
Seven miles after Lisieux we have a splendid stretch of

On the River Dives.

country before us, as our road begins the series of switch-back descents that bring us to St. Pierre-sur-Dives, where there is an admirable specimen of a thirteenth century market-hall, *les Halles*. Its vast billowy roof rests on low stone buttressed walls, and it would make the fame and fortune of an English country town. The great abbey church suggests a fine but rustic St. Pierre de Lisieux, and it, too, would be famous in less

favoured countries than Normandy. Sometimes one sees an image in the Rococo style that is of real beauty; and I think the Madonna in the Lady Chapel is one of these.

Most of the guide-books, waxing enthusiastic, tell the traveller to spend half a day at Falaise, and I have myself known parties devote quite an hour to it: a year afterwards the bolder spirits



The lower Town, Falaise.

of them will still describe it to their friends. We, who have neither the eyes of Argus nor the memory of Lord Macaulay, may stay here for a few days without feeling that we are slighting the rest of the universe.

For, indeed, Falaise is one of the places to make friends with. The beauty of its situation is equal to that of many a town that folk cross the Alps to see; its buildings are worthy of the historic interest which belongs of right to the favourite stronghold of the Norman dukes, the birthplace of the Conqueror; and its streets would give an artist constant employment for a month.

The position of Falaise in history is a military one. Few towns deserve better to have given birth to a great conqueror. Long before he had seen Arlette, Robert the Devil was in turn defending and attacking the strong little town. William's very

first military exploit was to take Falaise from Toustain who had seized it. Later on, the castle was much used as a prison, and here King John confined Arthur; but Philippe Auguste took it back from John. In the Hundred Years War, Henry V. seized it, and Charles VII. recovered it. A century later it fell to the Protestants, and then to the Catholics; then Coligny recovered it, and after two more sieges it fell finally into the hands of

Washing Place, Falaise.

Henri IV. Life must have been full of incident to the Falaisiens.

A few steps along the principal street from the *Grand Cerf* bring one to the path that leads down among old stone cottages to the valley of the Ante, past the ancient gateway, the Porte des Cordeliers, now a peaceful dwelling-place reached from the inside by a flight of steps. We can wander among the streets of this wonderful valley, and notice the spinning machines in the cottages, and the children playing, the flowers on the window-sills, the queer little bridges over the stream, the endless variety of pretty corners, the character of the old houses which abound here as well as in the upper part of the town; for though the houses of Falaise are not curiosities that can be labelled, as at Lisieux, I think they are even more delightful. As we go on through unexpected paths, sometimes between cottages, sometimes overlooking terraces where apple trees

grow, the Castle of Falaise comes grandly into view, its huge square keep held up by great buttresses on the high crag, a tall round tower bearing it company at the side. It looks from here not like a ruin, but like some fairy palace; and one almost expects to see the gleam of armour on its heights.

There is a Fontaine d'Arlette near the foot of the castle, and its title is given also in English for the benefit of the guileless visitor. Hard by, it is interesting to note, is a flourishing tannery, redolent of history. Does that tanner, I wonder, claim to be hundredth cousin to Queen Victoria?

We can walk up along the side of the rocky hill till we are close to the Tour Talbot, and there at its side is a huge ivy-grown chasm in the wall. This is the "Brêche Henri IV.," the breach which that monarch made and through which he entered to take the castle from the Ligueurs. It had changed hands many times before, but the unmended breach bears witness that peace followed in the wake of Henri of Navarre. We can then follow along the side of the huge south wall, and mark well its solid bastions, since the cottages that lie at its feet hide nothing of its great height. At the east we pass round by the Gendarmerie to the entrance, and walk along the great wall on the inside till the round tower and the enormous square keep are before us. Gaillard was a fortress to guard an important highway; but this keep is a fortified palace. We enter it hard by the original gateway, which is high out of our reach now that the drawbridge and steps are gone. A flight of steps in the partition wall brings us up on to the second story, where a melancholy restoration tries to give us some idea of its original condition. Down in the basement there is a round hole—not a well, for it is quite shallow, but a *saloir* or place for salting meat, it is thought. Above that is the first story; we are standing on the second; there seems to have been a third overhead. The western end, between the windows, was a corridor, which gave access to the rooms on either side of the partition wall that once divided this story too, as we can see by the marks in the east

wall. Fine rooms they must have been, with very comfortable alcoves by the pretty windows, some of which have still their old capitals that are carved with interlaced work.

But, alas for the legends which our guide will tell us! If Duke Robert first saw the tanner's daughter from that window on the north side, we have final proof that telescopes were invented in his day. Only even then he could not have seen her from there. For the keep cannot have been built before the twelfth century, and there is nothing left of Robert's castle. It follows, too, that William the Conqueror was not born in the gloomy cell where a printed poem bids us bend our knees and perform other acts of anachronistic devotion. Prince Arthur was indeed shut up somewhere here by John, but then we have no right to invent a *cachot* for him.

On the north side of the keep a restored fireplace marks the site of the principal room; beyond it is a little chapel in the thickness of the wall. What a world of romance hangs about this great ruin as we portion out its chambers in our fancy! It would have been in such a place that the legendary heroes of Arthurian chivalry dwelt—and from such a window as one of these the Lady of Shalott must have leaned to gaze out upon a landscape not less noble.

On the west of the keep is a smaller building, called the Salle des Chevaliers, with late windows and a restored fireplace.

From here the guide will take us to the Tour Talbot, which was probably built two hundred years before Talbot existed. It seems to belong to the class of towers which Philippe Auguste erected when he won Normandy for the French crown. Like those at Gisors and at Rouen, it is circular and high, amazingly high it appears as we climb up the staircase in its wall and look down upon the trees from the uppermost story. It contains five stories. As we approach it, we look down to the circular opening of the "*oubliette*" which was either for prisoners or provisions—probably for the latter, though the stories that are told one of these old castles would lead one to suppose that their

Falaise Castle: the Tour Talbot.

masters had no appetite for anything but cruelty. There is the usual well in the thickness of the wall, with an opening into each story; and when the guide throws a piece of lighted paper down, it seems to be of awful depth, although it was once far

deeper. In the uppermost room, called the Governor's, there is a fireplace ; but this part of the tower is not so old as the rest. There are most glorious views from the little window seats, and altogether one can imagine no better study for a philosopher than one of these stone chambers : the well would have supplied his simple needs, and the *oubliette* could have received his manuscript.

From the castle we can realise the splendid situation of Falaise. Its two churches mark the ridge of the hill, and its streets straggle out among the trees and orchards and terraces of the valley like so many stone rivers. Opposite, the great rocks of Mont Mirat hang among its bushes ; and we must by all means cross over and climb up that hill by one of the paths among the blackberries and hawthorn, till we reach the flat summit, where we can sit on a summer evening on one of the rocks that lie among the heather and gorse, and look upon the lovely land that lies about us.

Near the castle is the dashing statue of William the Conqueror, which stands in the square before the church of Ste. Trinité. This church is remarkable for the fact that its eastern part skips over an archway, to form a sort of little ambulatory that climbs up behind the high altar and leads to the tiny Lady Chapel, which we should have thought larger as we stood below the archway. On emerging through the smells which linger in this tunnel to the south side, we are rewarded with a very pretty corner of the church. A Renaissance pinnacle displays its charms near windows which have very delicately carved drip-stones, and these rest on little men-at-arms—a warrior with sword and buckler, a long-bowman kneeling on his quiver, a cross-bowman, and a man with club and shield. The north porch of Ste. Trinité is famous. It is a work of the third decade of the sixteenth century, much decayed, and in it the artist has—if we may be allowed the phrase—let the Gothic down easily. The corner buttresses have slender Gothic shafts, yet between these shafts are quaint little orders, and

above their Gothic caps the shafts end in consols! So shafts and arches, gargoyles and pediments, are jumbled together with much daring and effect. The western porch is blocked with an angular unusual baptistery. Within, the low arches of the thirteenth century tower drop down oddly between the higher nave and highest choir. This choir was begun in 1510 and was good Renaissance work, but the restorers have so completely restored it that they felt themselves justified in inscribing conspicuously on a capital the dates 1894, 1895, 1896. Some of the caps on the north piers of the nave have been hacked away, but enough remains to give us a good idea of various trades in the fifteenth century, and St. Sebastian can be traced, with other saints.

The beautiful church of St. Gervais is still in the restorers' hands, and the houses that were built up against it are disappearing. It is Norman in a sort of Flamboyant frock, and its fine twelfth century tower remains unspoilt as yet. Within, it runs slightly uphill like St. Jacques at Lisieux; and when I last saw it, the Suisse in a blue blouse instead of his habit of ceremony was sweeping the choir with a pipe in his mouth. The south side of the nave is still Norman, with a plain wall (once covered with frescoes) instead of a triforium. It is interesting to notice the way the two eastern piers here have been rehandled in two very different periods.

The suburb of Guibray grew up round its church, and the church grew up round a statue of the Madonna, discovered, like that of La Couture, by an intelligent sheep; and Guibray is famous all over Normandy for the fair which the flocking together of pilgrims brought about on the festival of the Assumption. Folk say that Duke William, child of a Falaise peasant and sire of English princes, established the *Foire de Guibray*; perhaps it is older even than that. It lasts for about a week either side of August 15th, which is to the Church the feast of the Assumption, and to all France a great bank-holiday.

St. Gervais

All the way up from Falaise to Guibray on the straight Argentan road are crowds of country people, coming and going, and the humble *cafés* at the side are filled with quiet men and women who eat the frugal luxuries they have earned by so much toil. Most turn off near the top of the hill to go into the pleasure-fair, but that is only the light-hearted child of the

horse-fair which is held further on round the Norman church that is the mother of it all. There, in the rambling dusty square before the great porch, stand crowds of farmers in sombre black blouses, attendant on innumerable horses of various degree; and there a little further on is the fenced run where the meek beasts are being put through their paces. In the spreading western porch (which was made so large just to give shelter at fair time) the quiet talk of the farmers dies away, and the sound of chanting takes its place. Vespers is being sung within the church. Slim green chains of holly-leaves spread from vault to piers, long gonfalons of Mary's blue add new colour to the old white stone; under the balustrade with which the subjects of Louis XVIII. softened the sternness of a Norman apse, gleam the lights of many candles. The procession of the Maiden to whom Guibray owes so much is to begin. Chanting her Litany, it moves round the church, *Sancta Maria, Sancta Dei Genetrix, Sancta Virgo Virginum, ora pro nobis.* First, in gorgeous hat, rapping the heavy stick of his office, comes the Suisse, martial as everything must be to command respect in France; his long grey imperial recalls the time when German hosts swept over the land. Then follow the cross and the embroidered banner of our Lady of Guibray, and scarlet acolytes, and bronzed singing men in their copes. *Mater amabilis, Mater admirabilis, Mater Creatoris, ora pro nobis.* Four girls in white frocks carry the golden image of the Virgin, and round about them are little village children wearing white wreaths on their heads in token of their first communion. The *curé* follows in a cope of cloth of gold; he is bronzed too, and with spare features, in strong contrast to the lusty priest who is singing so heartily among the children. Grizzled laymen of the Confraternity walk last of all; and then the procession passes away and dissolves into the choir; and the *curé* goes up to the altar, with hands muffled in the humeral veil, to give the Benediction with the sacred Host.

The *Salut* is over, and the people pass out into the blazing

sun; to thread their way home among the horses that do not kick and the serious farmers that never gesticulate over their bargains.

All who have not business to keep them from its delights are now at the pleasure-fair, on the other side of those streets of Guibray which look more deserted than ever at this time. There, too, are the sombre farmers, but young men also in smart attire, and girls with flowery hats, and harmless little soldiers, and people of every age and description. They stroll past the booths, resisting for the most part the attractions of sweets, and cutlery, and ginger-bread, and basket-work, and real violins, and even of the nougat merchant, who wears a crimson fez and announces that he will take (at a reduction) those foreign coins which elsewhere remain overlong in the purse. They stroll, the pleasure-seekers of the *arrondissement* of Falaise, honest couples arm in arm, into the heart of the fair, where are such vanities as might have tempted the Pilgrim himself. Dizzy swings for the young, and for the strong-headed of all ages a giant roundabout, whose intricate parts gleam with all the splendours of the East, and whose machine-made interminable music forms the atmosphere of the whole fair. Round these incessant entertainments the square teems with people, who are solicited by the owners of the great shows that stretch along its four sides. The cautious peasant requires much persuasion before his fired imagination prompts him to mount the steps, pay his *sous*, and enter the canvas doors of mystery. This ceaseless importunity is really the fun of the fair. Every inch of frontage teems with gaudy imaginings, and every performer has to display himself on the platform before his show begins. There, for instance, is the *Monstre des Mers*, a blood-curdling picture of a boat's crew being devoured by a hideous leviathan. Yet we know that the men who, with the courage of their sex, are gazing through the conspicuous iron bars into the tank, see nothing but some obscure innocent seal, whose only claim to inspire horror lies in a slight natural deformity.

And there on the platform of the *Eden-Cirque* one gentleman in pink is holding aloft on the palm of his hand another gentleman in pink, while two hard-featured ladies in short orange skirts gesticulate frantically to the gaping youth of Falaise. Yet, if we pay our twenty centimes, and enter, the two gentlemen in pink will but continue to throw each other about, and the two orange ladies cannot do much else than gesticulate.

Château near Falaise.

And the contents of that imposing *Maison des Actualités Historiques* do not justify one's natural anticipations; behind the long row of magnifying glasses are pictures which would be rejected by a penny illustrated paper.

But I am unjust. There is often something worth seeing behind all this exaggeration. At the *Théatre des Familles*, for instance, where four black-haired ladies in light blue silk are dancing with paper hoops, and a bibulous gentleman in red velvet is blowing a cornet while another in a clown's dress is violently beating a drum, thirty centimes will not be spent in vain; for the gentleman in red can lie on his back and perform amazingly neat juggling with his feet, and, though it must be confessed the tableaux of Jeanne d'Arc are not quite up to the

picture which represents her so heroically scaling a wall, yet the four ladies in blue do their posing with an air that is worthy of a richer setting. And, then, two of them juggle with knives and bells. Yesterday they were waltzing round the platform in pink ; and the clown was receiving resounding slaps from the gentleman in red velvet. And always when a sufficient crowd is collected outside, the dancing grows faster, the drums are banged, the performers shout inaudibly through the din, and an audience begins to pass up by twos and threes from the crowd. So it is when drum and trumpet stir the blood for battle ; that which poor average man dare not do in his normal solitary condition, he will do in the press of fellowship and the stir of boisterous music.

Yet why is that so necessary at a canvas theatre which is not at all needed at a stucco one? Sir Henry Irving does not stand under the portico of the Lyceum and yell at the people of the Strand to come and see his latest impersonations. Yet the public is at a fair specially to seek amusement, and it is not so in the Strand. Why then should busy London need no inducement, and holiday-making Falaise need so much? Our Princess's Theatre in London condescends a little more to the art of advertisement. But when "The Two Little Vagabonds" was played there, the whole company did not arise and waltz on a platform outside the theatre. Yet that is what they do at the *Théâtre des Soirées Dramatiques*, when that pretty little melodrama is being acted in its French original, "*Les Deux Gosses*" ; and with all due respect to the London artists (whose performance I had not the pleasure of seeing), I do not think they can have shown much better acting than this company of strolling players, who had to contend all the while with the noise of music and drums and bells, and of people firing at clay pipes outside.

There is always something to do or see at a fair. For me the massacre of clay pipes has a deadly fascination. For others of more intellectual capacities there is always the pleasure of

tracing artistic talent among the curious crowd of performers, who through training, or misfortune, or the love of a roaming life, or some ineradicable defect, are doomed to hammer out their livelihood from the hard-handed, close-fisted peasantry. What pictures there are too! The canvas circus, rimmed with stolid hinds; a flaring coster's lamp tied to the tent-pole, and under its uncertain light a circling pony on whose indifferent back a thin little girl performs her simple tricks. The feeling of family relationship gives a pathos to the whole scene. It is the father who stands in dingy pink tights to urge on the unwilling pony; an elder brother plays the clown with unconcealed seriousness; the mother, bedizened as she is, nurses her baby without reserve outside the ring, and near her a small boy, barely emerged from frocks, waits in his professional attire for the moment when he is to turn somersault on his father's head.

A road through swaying uplands, where heather appears and sweet-scented pine here and there, covers the thirteen miles between Falaise and Argentan. The streets of Argentan scramble over its hillock, and at the top is the church of St. Germain, whose towers were visible miles along the road, whence they looked at first like two broad poplars. So quiet the town is, so retired, with an air of the days of the Grand Monarque about it. Its medieval glories have faded almost away; one forgets that it was at Argentan that Henry II. heard of the murder of Becket, and lay for five weeks on ashes, seeing nobody. The shapely building whose iron gateways proclaim it now as a prison was once a castle; the chapel which belonged to it is let out in tenements. On the higher ground the ruins of the real stronghold, the Donjon du Connetable, are hidden by a hotel. The old keep, which was sixty feet high, made the inhabitants of Argentan nervous, and was destroyed at their request more than two hundred years ago. The Palais Ducal, which stood within the enceinte, is gone. Only the Tour Marguerite retains with its machi-

colation a mildly martial air. It is not very high, and a pillow hangs out of one of its windows. An ancient door still admits to its stone staircase, which though included within the unbroken circle of its walls, rises through the top of the tower and has an independent roof of its own, which adds to the

The Castle, Argentan.

quaintness of the red-tiled cone that grows from the upper story to end in a fascinating knob.

As we first come into Argentan we pass the lesser church of St. Martin, and we can enter through its east door, near which the canopies of two niches twist so prettily together. Do not put any money into the box which appeals for funds towards the restoration; for the charm of the church will be gone if that fatal thing is ever done. It has tracery like that of our own Jacobean Gothic,—and a delightful triforium which consists of a classical arcade with open panels all differently carved, and the Louis XIV. reredos with its statue of the saint fits in well with all the rest. But the glass in its choir is the special treasure of St. Martin. M. Palustre tells us that it is very important as it led to quite a school, and that its char-

acteristics are the abundant use of a red, lightly oranged, and a certain dryness of design which does not hinder the elegance of its forms. Besides this red there are abundant blues and purples and pinks. Beginning at the north, the first picture is the Last Supper, a spacious scene with good architecture, and a nice array of jugs in the foreground. Above this is the Agony in the Garden. Next, Christ before Pilate, with François I. in one of the divisions. Next, the miracle of St. Veronica, with Abraham's Sacrifice above, and St. Anne, and Eli teaching Samuel. The Crucifixion in the centre is slightly restored; so is the Descent from the Cross, a striking design. Next is the Ascension; and in the last window the Pentecostal Dove is spreading a radiance of fire upon the Apostles.

The elaborate north porch of St. Germain projects forward rather like that of St. Maclou at Rouen. Above it rises the tower, a noble pile of seventeenth century arches and urns, which would receive the admiration it deserves were it in London and its author Christopher Wren. As we go along the north side we notice that some of the windows have been cleared of their late Gothic tracery; but it is the *chevet* that is most remarkable, with its round windows, and its buttresses, which are faced with little columns in twos and threes, and crowned with the strangest pinnacles, some of which end solidly in a pediment, while others are in two parts joined by balusters or by flying strips of stone.

Beza, the Reformer, came to this church and smashed things about a bit; after which he mounted the pulpit, and preached against the evils of Popery. It recovered from his visit, and now has a certain air inside of old-world sumptuousness. One can almost see the gentlemen in wigs stretch across to hand each other snuff, one can almost hear the ladies rustling past in preternatural petticoats. They furnished the place up to their liking, in the generations before the red Flood, with iron screens and wainscotting for the choir, and images, and *retables*, and pictures,—indeed, there is actually a quite good

Argentan: The tower of St. Germain.

picture; it is by the Spaniard Navaretto. A huge Renaissance organ case bears witness to the pomp of Argentan in an earlier age; and a still earlier embellishment is the carving on one of the piers of the crossing. It represents an ass in complete harness, and is said to have had a companion ox opposite with

a view to the Christmas crib; an inscription tells us that we owe it to Jehan Moyne, mason, in 1488.

The east end is even more curious within than without. When it was enlarged by the exterior wall, the old buttresses were left standing inside as piers. They are encased in short pillars; and, though M. Palustre justly criticises these as a bizarre scaffolding—a proof that the Renaissance was becoming heavy and *gauche*—yet one is thankful for their quaintness; and the windows, which form a continuous round-headed arcade, are exceedingly graceful.

In the first chapel next the north porch an inscription announces, *Ci-gît le cœur de la bien-heureuse Marguerite de Lorraine.* She is the saint of Argentan, a saint by popular canonisation because of her holy life among the poor and the many miracles which are said to have been wrought at her tomb. It is after her that the Tour Marguerite is named. Princess Marguerite of Lorraine, Duchess of Alençon, great-grandmother of Henri IV., was certainly a woman of most beautiful character. In her widowhood she redoubled her good works, and in 1517 founded the monastery of Ste. Claire at Argentan; in 1520 she accomplished the desire of her life in taking the veil, and henceforth was known only as Soeur Marguerite. A year after her profession she died in the poverty she had chosen, a true daughter of St. Francis whose habit she wore. In spite of the great veneration in which her relics were held, only her heart has been preserved, for at the Revolution an incredible decree of the Convention ordered that lead coffins should be melted down to provide material for bullets. They took up the coffins at Argentan, brought them to the city ditch and then, knocking open one end, shot out their contents. A good workman tried to save the body of Marguerite by offering to make with his own hands a new coffin of wood, but the apostles of equality shouted in reply: "*Point de distinction pour Marguerite de Lorraine!*"

Argentan would be a good place for a long stay. Being on

the line between Paris and Granville, and also in direct communication with Caen, and Sées, and Alençon, it is accessible as well as secluded. One could make it a centre for exploring that corner of Normandy of which Alençon is the border town, and for the valley of the Orne and for Mortagne. Quite near to Argentan, though out of our route, are the two in-

Argentan.

teresting villages of Exmes and Almenèches; they are both described in Freeman's *Travels in Normandy and Maine*, a book which you should bring with you if you mean to stay any time at Argentan.

The road straight down the middle of the town leads to Ecouché, which is only five miles off. Like all the others this street is pretty; on the right is the Hôtel des Trois Marie, which an amusing misprint in Joanne makes the Hôtel des Trois Marins. The bridge at the bottom crosses the Orne, a shallow, sluggish river here, and on the left the picturesque double galleries of a fifteenth century house look over the water.

Ecouché is a tumble-down little place, with an anyhow sort of church, and a dilapidated market-hall. But it is not un-

prosperous, nor is it to be despised for food and rest. We are coming now into fine country, and greener villages, of which the grass square (how sweet is grass after gravel !) and

The Orne at Argentan.

the cottage gardens of Ecouché gives a foretaste. From Ecouché to Ferté-Macé by way of Ranes is fourteen miles.

As we go up the village street of Ranes, we notice a change in the look of things. We have left the land of cold white frontages behind us, and this is the gate of the country of dark grey stone, where old houses last longer and new houses look nobler, and where nature is more luxuriant. Before us is the tower of the village church, its dark stones looking almost black, and set well apart from each other as if they needed no

mortar. The tower has four gables; a dark choir and sacristy lie grouped at its feet. It is quite unpretentious, but it seems to me one of the most beautifully impressive things I have seen in Normandy. On the other side of the pretty village

The old Market Hall, Ecouché.

square is a noble specimen of a country *château:* it belongs to the beginning of the sixteenth century, and centres in a broad battlemented tower.

La Ferté-Macé, now a flourishing country town, was once a castle, as its name declares: *Ferté* is *feritas* or fortress, and Ferté-Macé just means the Fortress of Matthew. The old sires of La Ferté built here a castle, the site of which is preserved by some of the street-names—Rue des Fossés-Nicole, Rue de la Barre, La Poterne, Place du Château—and, as was the pious habit of the times, they then founded a priory. It was a son of the founder who distinguished himself at the Battle of Hastings—

> "Cil de Mombrai et de Saie
> Et li sire de la Ferté
> Maint Engleiz unt acraventé."

We receive better treatment nowadays at Norman hands; the landlord of the *Cheval Blanc* makes ample amends for any little roughness once associated with the name of La Ferté.

Only the tower and choir now remain of the old Norman priory; and it is characteristic of the town's martial history that there are ominous loopholes in the turret of the monastic church. La Ferté retains a certain air of feudal dignity; and the powerful dark stone almost saves some parts of the atrocious modern church, though its builders have managed to make even their bare wall spaces frivolous by arranging the stones in patterns.

It is twelve miles straight through the Forêt d'Andaine to Domfront; but, if we like, we can make a détour through the Forêt de la Ferté to Bagnoles, a well-known watering place, whither jaded Parisians repair to restore their digestions. The valley of Bagnoles is a chasm in the great chain of quartzite hills, which stretch on to Mortain; it lies beautifully in the forest, which is as yet fresh and unspoilt, so that one can lie on the heather under the firs and eat bilberries to one's heart's content. And to the traveller it is interesting to come thus suddenly upon the villas and hotels which have grown up round the mineral springs, to see smart frocks, and pavilions, and the inevitable casino with its theatre and its *petits chevaux*, and then to plunge again into the forest on his way to the medieval town of Domfront. It is by a perfectly straight road, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left, that he must go, past the railway station, and avoiding the left-hand turning that leads to Juvigny. After five miles he comes to one of the forest cottages where several cross-roads meet, and here he takes the road that runs due west, and so proceeds through the huge forest of young oak-trees with patches of fir here and there, till the cultivated fields begin to appear through the heather banks, and suddenly the magnificent country of Passais lies almost at his feet. Domfront is now quite near; it lies at the end of the forest range on which he has been travelling; and so, while the railway-passenger finds it perched upon its hill, the happier cyclist glides down into the ancient city, and sees the vast stretches of woodland lie all around it like the sea.

Domfront: Notre-Dame-sur-l'Eau.

CHAPTER V

DOMFRONT, MORTAIN, VIRE

TAKE it all in all, Domfront is one of the most interesting medieval towns in France. It stands upon its hill, a collection of lowly stone houses, crossed by little streets with undiscoverable corners, surrounded still for the most part by its ancient walls. It has no perfect monuments, and nothing perhaps of very striking interest, for its castle is but a ruin. But it is the whole place and its surroundings that give one so excellent an idea of what an old city was like. English people go to two or three towns in Normandy to look at a few monuments stranded among steam-trams and showy shops; but they come little to Domfront which would teach them, and I think, would please them infinitely more. And this neglect is evident by the conduct of the natives, who would indeed do well to look at strangers a little less and at their own city a little more. They seem to know less about it than the traveller of a day.

Furthermore, Domfront lies among the loveliest country of fields and hills, a miniature Switzerland, that stretches to Mortain and Vire, and past the Mont Margantin into Maine, the province from which the Conqueror wrested Domfront by the mere terror which his name inspired.

The suburban Rue d'Alençon by which Domfront is entered from the east, becomes the Grande Rue of the old town at the fragment of an old tower and gate, whence it climbs up into the heart of Domfront. We will not enter it, but will go by the road to the left which leads us along the south side below the city walls. It is from this road that we can get so excellent an idea of the place; and it will take us to the castle which is at the west. Tower after tower of the fortification appears on our right as we go along; the walls in between are worked into houses; the towers themselves are all inhabited, windows are cut in their machicolation, and chimneys project innocently from them. At their base are terraced gardens, luxuriant with vine and pear trees and flowers and French beans. Little flights of steps run in and out, giving access from our road. It is a sight such as we have not seen before, and shall not see again.

At the end of the road is a bank of fennel and wild clematis: fruit trees grow below it, and beyond them lies a vast expanse of country that makes us turn our backs upon the old ramparts. For when can we hesitate when nature spreads out her loveliness in rivalry with that of human making? The country before us stretches out into infinite distance, where the dark green of its innumerable trees passes into blue. On the left the forest rises like a huge wave over Mont Margantin, on the right it dies away on the level towards the sea where Mont-St.-Michel lies hidden, and there the setting sun comes to throw its crimson and gold, leaving the inland country in blue and opal. When the sun has gone, a white mist enfolds the rich land of Passais, and the old walls regain their martial consequence in the cold glamour of the moon, looking as in the days that are past when Domfront was a terror to the country at its feet. We can understand the cry of exultation that Wace puts into the mouths of the conquering Normans—

"De ci qu'à la grant mer
N'a qui lor peust contrester."

A flight of steps leads up from here to the castle. It enters by the breach which was made on the bloodiest day in all the history of Domfront. For here it was that Montgommery made his last stand before the royalist troops of Matignon.

The story is a stirring one. In 1574 Domfront had been taken by two Protestant adventurers, Ambroise and René le Hérice; Ambroise, who was known as le Balafré, the Scarred, ruled and taxed the people with great cruelty, calling himself king and master of Domfront.

This was the position when Gabriel de Lorges, Comte de Montgommery, arrived. Montgommery is famous for the accident which fifteen years before had made him a regicide: he was tilting against Henri II. when a splinter from his lance lifted the King's visor and pierced him in the eye. The King died, leaving his widow, Catherine de Médicis, most deadly of foes, to manage the kingdom, Montgommery became a Calvinist. Three years later he only escaped the Massacre of St. Bartholomew by galloping out of Paris with a few friends. The *grand et roide jeune homme, nonchalant et peu soucieux*, who loved gaming and pleasure, became one of the most redoubtable leaders on the Calvinist side; his carelessness left him the moment he was in the field.

Such was the man who arrived at Domfront in the May of 1574, having dashed out of Carentan with a company of sixty horse. He had scarcely entered the castle when he found that Matignon, the royalist general, had left the siege of St. Lo (ch. VII) on the news of his enemy's escape, and was now surrounding Domfront. It was in those days a weak town with walls already decrepit and out of date; very few of its inhabitants were Huguenots, and they all had reason to hate le Balafré, whose ally Montgommery now was. The little force only numbered a hundred and fifty men, and against them fresh troops crowded up on every side, *promptement et joyeusement, comme pour prendre une beste furieuse et qui a gasté tout le pays.* This was the spirit in which the siege was conducted.

The Calvinists agreed to hold out to the bitter end. They began hostilities with a sortie of twenty-five horsemen whose audacity was rewarded by success and followed inevitably by retirement. Matignon then set up his batteries. More troops poured into the King's army every day, sent by the implacable Catherine de Médicis; nothing was heard but the drums and trumpets of the fresh arrivals, and soon there were 6,000 arquebusiers and 1,200 horse against the hundred and fifty. Even of these, many who cared little about the religious questions at issue were won over by the secret overtures of their Catholic friends. Le Balafré had been killed at the outset in a quarrel with one of Montgommery's men. He was buried in a tomb in Notre-Dame-sur-l'Eau, but after a few days the King's troops came there and dragged his body out, and hung it in chains on Tertre Grisière, which "marvellously displeased" the garrison, who tried to bring it down with their fire-arms. A long and naively vindictive account of this beastly incident is preserved from the pen of the gentleman whose ancestral tomb in Notre-Dame had been violated by the interment.

On May 23rd the great attack began. The six pieces on Tertre Grisière blazed away and made a breach in the town which Montgommery's little band could not attempt to hold. Thirty Bretons used the opportunity to slip over to the enemy. By noon a breach was made in the castle wall. Montgommery tried to spike the enemy's guns by a sortie, but was driven back with loss. Then for nearly two hours he defended the breach against the murderous fire of the arquebusses. At two o'clock the columns were seen advancing through the smoke to the assault—a thousand gentlemen in armour, four hundred pikemen in corselets, six hundred arquebusiers with morions on their heads. On the ruined ramparts some forty men knelt around the chaplain as he offered up a prayer for the dying. The prayer was followed by the cry of *Aux armes!* and the forty stood up. As the first ranks of the attack moved into the fosse, a culverin from the flanking tower threw them

back for a moment; then followed a protracted struggle for the possession of the breach. Montgommery seemed to bear a charmed life, but many of his knights were killed, among them a young man named de Bont, who managed to write a letter to his mistress, with his own blood for ink, before he died. At 7 o'clock the royal troops sounded a retreat. Twenty-eight of the garrison remained, and of these some more slipped away during the night. Next morning there were only fifteen left, some of whom were dying, and the powder was all but gone. Montgommery, disappointed in his hope of dying sword in hand, offered to surrender. The negotiations went on for some time, but Matignon would only consent to a surrender at discretion.

Montgommery was taken to Paris and condemned to death. On June 26th he was led out to la Grève, recited his creed and prepared to lay his head on the block. As the Provost read the sentence to him, he commented,—"*C'est bien. Mes biens acquis et confisqués au roi! J'y consens. Mes sept tours de Montgommery rasées! J'y consens encore. Dégradé de noblesse! neuf fils et deux filles déclarés vilains. J'y consens toujours,—s'ils n'ont la vertu des nobles, pour s'en relever!*"

As it happened his son became a great fighter. We shall meet with him at Mont-St.-Michel. The line did not disappear till the beginning of the eighteenth century, when the last male died an idiot.

And now let us take our bearings in the castle; for there is something to be made out still among its ruins. The breach where we have entered is on the south side. Due north of us are the towering ruins of the square Norman keep, built of chunks of rock that are faced with hard granite, and flanked with four towers. Let us now follow the wall to the corner tower on our east, which has a fragment of another tower within it. We are now looking down on to the road that lies in the old fosse which separates the castle on its eastern side from the town. As we go along by this road the "casemates" lie on our left: they are tunnels in the thickness of the wall, fitted with loop-

holes, and some more have been recently excavated in the garden of the keeper, who will show them to us. The road (or fosse) is crossed here by a bridge that passes near where the old entrance was. And now if we go on towards the northern part of the castle we can see among the vegetable gardens the east of the walls of the chapel, which is N.N.E of the keep, so that chapel, keep, and breach are in a line with each other, from N.N.E to S.S.W. It was here Henry II received the legates who had been sent to negotiate in the matter of Thomas à Becket. He was hunting in the forest with his son when they arrived. He came up to see them, and as they were talking together the prince dashed in with his huntsmen, blowing their horns and making a great noise to announce the capture of the stag. Henry left the legates and went off to congratulate his son, and then returned at his royal leisure to continue the conversation.

A little to the west of the breach where we entered, the ramparts jut out to form the square Tour de Presles, at the foot of which the rock falls precipitously away. Here there is another view of the country ; and we can see clearly, near the scar which is made in the green landscape by the railway station below, the firm little Norman church of Notre-Dame-sur-l'Eau, which we shall visit on our way to Mortain.

From the Tour de Presles the wall slopes inward, to meet the northern wall which also slopes inward, so that the enceinte presents almost a pointed front at this the western extremity of the spur on which it stands. Here the walls drop somewhat out of sight, and we look straight across the deep gorge (where a train is crawling like a black caterpillar by the river Varenne) to the Tertre Grisière, a huge mass of rock thrown up by some convulsion of nature and now covered in part with pines and heather. The Varenne forms a natural moat on this side. Furthermore it is a witness that we have crossed the great watershed ; for whereas the Orne runs northwards to the English Channel, the waters of the Varenne are destined to find their way by the Loire to the Bay of Biscay.

The Tertre Grisière which Domfront Castle confronts, hill standing against hill as at Falaise, and castle against crag, has its place in the local tradition. For one thing, it is said to have been the hanging place, and Domfront has always been famous for its gibbet; witness the saying—

> "Domfront, Ville de malheur,
> Arrivé à midi, pendu à une heure :
> Pas seulement le temps de dîner!"

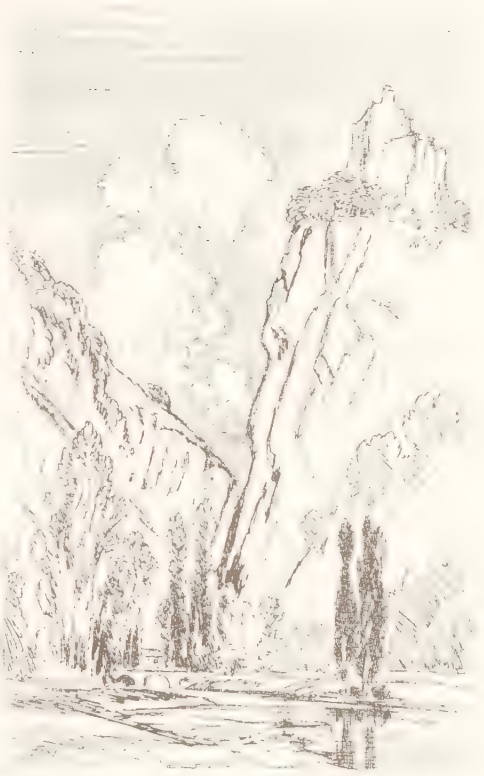
The origin of this apostrophe is lost in antiquity. I have read five stories of its origin, all quite different, wherefore I shall recount none. Certainly there were plenty of occasions for it. A local poet has written—

> "Le tranchant de la guillotine
> Donne une égalité mesquine ;
> Le privilège des Normands
> Etait de mourir haut, et grands."

This privilege is said to have been at one time so common that a curé of Domfront insisted on charging his burial fees at the time of baptism. "*Que voulez-vous, Monseigneur?*" he said to his bishop, when his parishioners complained, "*Mes ouailles ont pour habitude de se faire pendre et de me priver ainsi de mes droits. Il faut bien y pouvoir!*"

Legend attributes even the natural formation of the rocks to miracle. There was once a holy hermit named Front (alas for the suspicious etymology!) who came hither to convert the people. There was also a lord named Talvas (he is more historical, but then he really lived much later); Talvas was the father of the castle, Front of the town. Furthermore there was a Dragon who behaved himself as dragons will do. He had the jaw of a crocodile, and the wings of a bat; spikes were on his back, and puffs of smoke emerged from his nostrils. Talvas sent for counsel to the Druids who lived in the forest of Passais. The High Priest slew two oxen, plunged his hand into their entrails, and said: "This is the oracle. Each day let there be drawn by lot a name from among the children; and

let the chosen one be thrown into the Dragon's cave at the third hour of the sun. For such is the destiny." After many children had been devoured, the lot fell on Talvas' daughter. She consoled her father as best she could, then clad herself in mourning and went bravely forth. At a turn in the road an old man appeared, holding a staff that was shaped like a cross. "Where are you going, my child?" he said. "To the tomb," replied the maiden, with the inaccuracy of youth. The old man pondered, prayed awhile, and then said, "No, you will not die." Then he went to the Dragon's lair, and adjured the monster to depart. With a horrid roar the Dragon rose into the air, darkening it as he wheeled over their heads, and plunged into the Varenne. Thus was formed the Fosse au Dragon.



Castle and Crag, Domfront.

Needless to say, Talvas accepted the faith of the holy man,

Dom Front ; and as there is no chronology in legend, we are not surprised to learn that Guillaume de Bellesme, called Talvas, founded the Church of Notre-Dame-sur-l'Eau about the year 1020. There were certainly lords of this name, most of whom died violent deaths and deserved the epithet of the second Guillaume, who was called Talvas the Cruel.

If we continue our walk round the north side of the town we shall find more walls and towers ; there are fourteen towers left, out of the twenty-four that once guarded Domfront. There is a gateway with flanking towers near the east where another bridge is thrown over the road. The church is nice, though of no architectural interest, as the guides say ; and every street of the little town is interesting. I read in the splendid pages of "Normandie Monumentale" that there is a Maison de la Prison somewhere, with a Norman oratory and altar in the thickness of the wall ; but no one in Domfront could tell me its whereabouts, which, I suppose, is because the natives have no eyes for anything but visitors.

We take leave of Domfront at the Church of Notre-Dame-sur l'Eau, which lies below the town on the banks of the Varenne. It was a perfect type of Norman architecture, and what is left is still of the best and purest ; but in 1836 some idiots who were making the new road to Mortain pulled down most of the nave instead of carrying the road round it, so that you must not be deceived by the present position of the west front and the absence of aisles. The destruction was the more detestable as the nave was very early in date ; the church was consecrated in 1056, and to this century belong the transepts with their narrow windows and strips of buttresses, and also what remains of the nave, but the chancel was added some hundred years later. The subsidiary apses within are like mere scoops in the walls with three small lights ; the twelfth century chancel has a more elaborate apse and is decorated with arcades. Near the high altar is an ample piscina (covered, unfortunately, with a board), having a

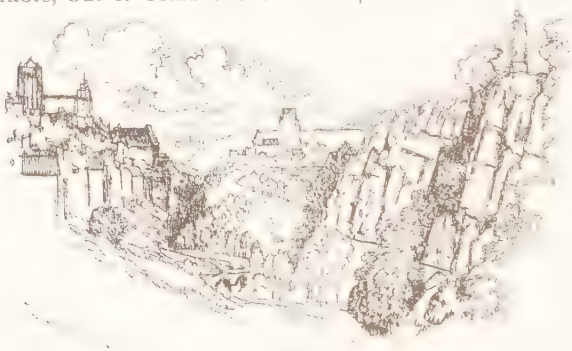
narrow shelf above it. But the altar itself is the most interesting thing of all, for it is early eleventh century—rather earlier than the consecration of the church—and such altars are very rare; it is a good specimen of its period, a heavy slab with large mouldings, resting on three legs, of which the two bigger ones are shaped rather like pre-Norman balusters; the surface behind the legs is only plaster. The Madonna in the reredos is of course not so early, but she is not later than the fourteenth century.

A short run of fifteen more miles brings us to Mortain, but the last part is rendered tedious by one of those pig-headed straight roads that make no attempt to negotiate the hills, and hide half the beauty of this most beautiful country. Still, as one gets gradually higher, some impression is gained of the hills and forests that surround Mortain, and when one at length reaches the place the reward is great.

Mortain consists mainly of one long street, which runs along the side of a hill that is almost a mountain. Its castle, of which hardly anything remains, stood on a rock, which curiously enough is *below* the town near the bank of the river Cance. In this valley, and quite close to the town, are two of the very few waterfalls that are to be found in Normandy. On the other side of the Cance the village of Neufbourg clings to the side of the rock. Mortain possesses a seminary, a huge square building which yet contains within its grim walls a small but typical Cistercian monastery, the Abbaye Blanche; church, chapter-house, and part of the cloister remain, good examples of the transitional style at an earlier stage than that of St. Evroult; at the west of the church is an undercroft, in an odd position, says Freeman, "forbidding any west front."

The principal church of Mortain, St. Evroult, is a perfect example of advanced Transitional, almost Early French work. It is lighted entirely by plain pointed windows, without any tracery or any invasions of other periods, except in the tower which stands apart, and in the Norman doorway on the south,

sole relic of an earlier fane. The freshness of the carving on this doorway shows how much we owe to the hard granitic stone. Later architects would have thought twice before they tampered with it, and modern restorers could find no excuse for destruction. It certainly gives to old things the freshness of youth and to new things some of the dignity of age; just inside the doorway, for instance, is a stoup that hardly looks less venerable, but it bears the date 1614. It is noticeable how



Mortain.

freely stone is used about here: at the foot of the church, women are washing in a stone tank, near which are two tables made of stone. The tower looks as if it belonged to much the same period as the church, though the pair of narrow windows that reach almost from gabled roof to base suggest a rather later date. Parker dates it c. 1250, and regards it as worthy to illustrate by the very exaggeration of its long windows, the difference between English and French towers. Standing like an Italian *campanile*, independent of its church, this tower of restrained but unusual appearance will remain in our minds as the symbol of Mortain. A solemn procession of round piers sweeps round nave and choir and broad apse; the capitals in the apse are plain, but elsewhere are carved with wave-like ornament that catches the light and gives relief to the prevailing severity. There are no transepts, but there are ambulatories

and a Lady Chapel beyond. The stalls have carved misericords, but they are rather harsh, as if by men who disdained the opportunities of such tractable material as wood.

Behind the church a path leads up to the chapel of St. Michel that crowns the hill, and it is only when we go there through the gorse and bracken that we realise how high is the hill upon which we are. As a matter of fact, when we stand on the great rocks that form the platform on which the chapel rests, we are just over a thousand feet above the sea. On the south-east stretches a broken ridge of rock, that reminds me of the Wenlock Edge in Shropshire, beyond it is Mont Margentan, which we first saw from Domfront. On the west the

Chapel of St. Michel, Mortain.

long straight white road to St. Hilaire-du-Harcouet looks as if cut by a knife through the trees; and in this direction on a clear day Mont-St.-Michel can be seen in the far distance. The sound of a church bell comes from some village below, through the rustling of the leaves and the incessant chirp of invisible grasshoppers; and the clear air is saturated with the scent of pine, which is sweeter than all the scents of summer flowers, and brings with it promise of health and memories of happy, active days.

I hardly know of any better place in Normandy to stay in than Mortain. It is high and healthy, fresh and clean, surrounded by forests and hills; and it contains in the Hôtel de la Poste, one of the nicest and most reasonable hotels I have had the good fortune to know. People who do not care for a continuous tour can make it the centre from which to visit not only Vire, but Domfront and Avranches, and even Mont-St.-Michel as well. Tinchebray, too, is within easy reach: Tinchebray, with its fortified fragment of a Romanesque church, near which raged the battle when Henry I. in a manner reversed the Battle of Hastings, winning Normandy for the English Crown.

There are many pleasant walks about Vire, but if we do not wish to stay there, it can be reached in an hour from Mortain. Only then we must pay the usual penalty of railway travelling by approaching it from its least interesting side. A long straight road leads up the hill to the Porte-Horloge which guards the old town. This belfry-gate, the lower part of which belongs to the thirteenth century, is alone worth coming to see. Two massive round towers flank the low pointed arch of the gate, and a row of machicolation runs round them and above the gateway itself; as we pass underneath we can look up and see the slit in the machicolation through which the marksmen could cover those who tried to force the entrance. Directly over the gate rises the high belfry, square in its lower part, with a charming hexagonal addition on the top, that is crowned with

Tinchebray

Vire: Porte-Horloge.

a cupola and ornamented with round balls. There is a clock on the square tower, and a painted image of our Lady with an inscription over the gateway.

In the Rue de Neufbourg, on our right on entering, is a quaint house like a doll's house in granite. The main street was covered ridiculously with pill-coloured paint in the days of

the mania for uniformity, but all the old streets are interesting. The church of Notre-Dame has that appearance of having been hewn out of the solid rock which the exigences of hard granite give to the Early and Decorated work alike. It has heavy piers and narrow aisles, and brackets project from the small separate openings of its triforium. At the south side, near the east,

The Church, Vire.

a great chapel has been built on, looking with its flat ceiling and plain gallery for all the world like one of our own Hanoverian churches. The date of this chapel is 1764; the Lady Chapel is late fifteenth century; the south transept early fourteenth, and the nave belongs to the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth centuries.

The ruins of Henry I.'s castle that made the history of Vire lie at the end of the esplanade, which it once covered altogether. From the western side one looks down upon the little valley where lies the hamlet of Les Vaux—Les Vaux-de-Vire—famous all the world over for having given its name to the light songs of the *Vaudeville*. Olivier Basselin, a merry fulling-miller of Les Vaux, gave birth to this form of French poetry in the bright drinking-songs which rank him next to Villon in fifteenth century literature.

There is something extremely winning about the genial old reprobate who could put forward this apology for himself:—

Ruins of Castle Vire.

"Hélas! que fait ung povre yvrogne?
Il se couche, et n'occit personne,
Ou bien il dict propos joyeulx.
Il ne songe point en uzure,
Et ne faict à personne injure,
Beuveur d'eau peut il faire mieulx?"

Falstaff himself could not have appreciated more keenly the humour of his own defects; like Falstaff, Olivier Basselin is said to have seen fighting, for the battle of Formigny claims him among its warriors. At all events, he looked upon warfare in his own queer way:—

" Tout à l'entour de nos remparts,
Nos ennemis sont en furie :
Sauvez nos tonneaux, je vous prie !
Prenez plus tost de nous, soudards,
Tous ce dont vous aurez envie :
Sauvez nos tonneaux, je vous prie. .
Au moins, s'il prend notre cité,
Qu'il n'y trouve plus que la lie
Vuidons nos tonneaux, je vous prie !"

His attitude towards his own red nose is in witty contrast to the sensitiveness of a Cyrano de Bergerac. Here are the first two stanzas from the poem *A mon nez* :—

" Beau nez, dont les rubis ont cousté mainte pipe
De vin blanc et clairet,
Et duquel la couleur richement participe
Du rouge et violet.
Gros nez ! qui te regard à travers un grand verre
Te juge encore plus beau :
Tu ne ressembles point au nez de quelque hère
Qui ne boit que de l'eau."

We can reach Les Vaux in about ten minutes down the side of the hill on the right ; or we can take the longer route, carefully described by Joanne, which leads down through the old town, past a thick-set tower of the ancient fortifications, across the River Vire where modern factories are busy, and along a road whence we look up at the fragment of castle, dormant over its limes upon the high peninsula whose sides are thickly covered by every kind of tree. We pass the outskirts of the town, a few houses lying on the hillside among terraced gardens, which stop suddenly to give place to heather and rock ; and at the opening of another valley lie a few houses. This is Les Vaux. The house where Basselin is said to have lived is at the back of a modern dwelling, sadly ruined ; it is a queer little structure of lath and plaster held up by a spreading stone wall, as it bulges over the rivulet. It is pervaded by that strong watery smell which we sometimes find in shallow rocky streams, a smell that seems an irony on poor Olivier's

The Market Place, Vire.

fame. A rough board proclaims his name; but if Vire were a prohibitionist town of the United States it could not show more contempt of this little house where dwelt the Anacreon of the middle ages.

And now for a word about the way to Mont-St.-Michel. The main road lies through St. Hilaire and Pontaubault,

Château at St.-James.

whence the *route nationale* should be followed as far as Brée; at Brée a by-road leads to les Pas, Beauvoir, and Mont-St.-Michel, thirty-five miles altogether. Or one can go round by the curiously named Saint-James, for the sake of its scenery and beautiful Renaissance *château*. It once had a real castle that William the Conqueror built to keep the Bretons out of Normandy; and it is in itself a very pretty village, with lamps hung across the street, and a wayside cross that Mr. Pennell has drawn for us. Those who might find the journey too long could take the train as far as Pontaubault and then ride. Even if they go by rail as far as Pontorson it is best to take one's bicycle, for vast streams of tourists converge at Mont-St.-Michel all the summer, and the diligences are crowded. A noisy lying crowd of men out-

side Pontorson Station will try to force you into private conveyances; and if you do not insist on travelling by the proper *correspondance* of the railway company, you will be charged ten francs for the journey, or landed at the door of a Pontorson hotel. All this will be avoided if you have no luggage but what you can carry on your bicycle. There is no difficulty about sleeping on the Mount, for the whole place is let out to supply extra apartments to the hotels; still in August it is safer to send a post-card engaging a room. Whatever the demand for rooms, the price remains the same (five francs a room with two beds) and everything is perfectly fair and straightforward *within* the walls of the Mount. Some people go over for the day in a carriage from Avranches; but this is only to waste money and time over a rather dull drive. It is far better to sleep at the Mount, and thus see it in the evening and at sunrise as well as in the heat and crowd of mid-day, and to realise what it is like both at high and low water.

The Cross at St. James.

Mont-Saint-Michel from the sands.

CHAPTER VI

MONT-SAINT-MICHEL

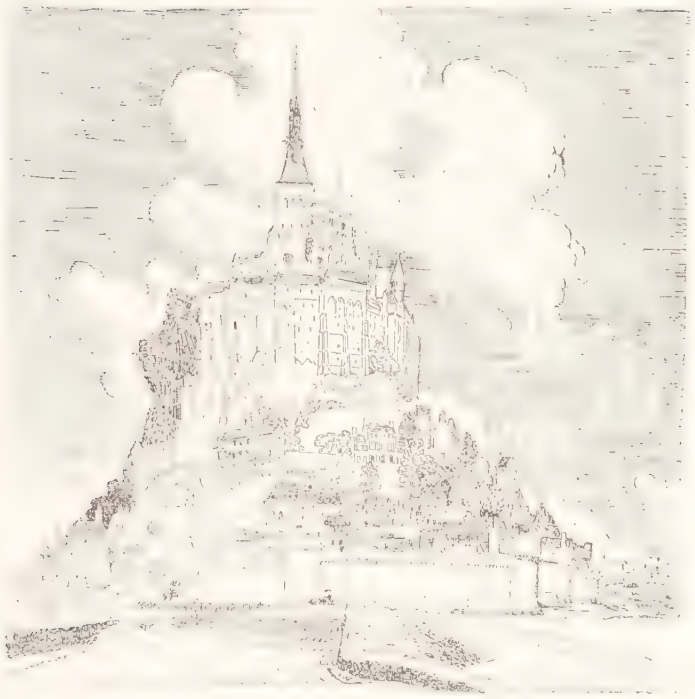
MONT-SAINT-MICHEL, said Victor Hugo, is to France what the Pyramids are to Egypt. This does not describe it; but then it is indescribable, for which reason one is quite grateful to another French writer for having said that it was the eighth wonder of the world.

We can only attempt to describe it by paradoxes. For one thing it is "amphibious," in the sea at one time, on dry land at another; the streams that run through the *tangue* that covers the great bay at low tide, are real fresh water rivers, and this *tangue* is as much earth as sand, as the greedy agriculturists well know. Once it was truly called *St.-Michel-au-péril-de-la-Mer*; for it was not connected with the mainland till the road was built in 1880, and many lives were lost, as indeed lives are still lost every year in the bay, by the

treacherous quick-sands or the swift inrush of the tide. Again, it is not one rock but two, a hollow rock built by the hands of men upon the solid rock which nature left as if by accident upon the shore. And, indeed, this is the secret of its supreme beauty, that when the plans were arranged for covering its summit with monastic buildings, the men of genius who then ruled the abbey avoided the easy method of levelling down the top of the rock, and built instead a great system of vaults and walls about it, on which they raised the church with its cloister and adjacent buildings.

Mont-St.-Michel is, furthermore, as much a fortress as an abbey; it came to be garrisoned by soldiers as well as monks, with a governor as well as a prior and abbot; and it would supply illustrations for an almost complete history of Gothic architecture, military, domestic, ecclesiastical. Indeed, one could find no better place for the study of those processes by which Gothic art grew and was perfected. Therefore you should count your visit at this place by days, and not (as nearly every one does) by hours; you should go round the abbey again and again; and if you want to make a fuller study of the place than this chapter supplies, you cannot do better than buy M. Paul Gout's "L'Histoire et l'Architecture Française au Mont-St.-Michel," which is on sale everywhere at the Mount, and will be precious, even to those who have not time to read it, for its admirable pictures and plans.

The heraldic cockel-shells of the abbey, which you will be pressed by many smiling importunates to carry away with you in some form or other, suggest another paradoxical reflection. St. James the Great owes his attributes to Mont-St.-Michel. For these attributes have been those of the pilgrim since the thirteenth century, and it was at Mont-St.-Michel that the pilgrim learnt to adopt his insignia. The scallops he gathered on the beach as souvenirs, and thus came to decorate with this symbol the wide cloak and flapped hat that he wore; the long staff was to test the firmness of the treacherous sands,



Mont-Saint-Michel.

and the little horn served as a signal for help if the fog or tide surprised him. The abbey adopted the cockle-shell with fleurs-de-lys for its arms, and the fine if rather inaccurate motto *Tremor Immensi Oceani.*

The history also of Mont-St-Michel is based upon a curious element of paradox; for the natural scientist, instead of being relegated to the prehistoric ages, overlaps the historian. The present physical condition of the place came about during the Christian era. When the Romans ruled in Gaul, the bay was yet dry ground, traversed over some fourteen miles by one of their military roads, and covered by the vast forest of Scissey

which stretched right away to what are now the Channel Islands. The Mount was then called (we are told) Mount Belenus by the Gauls in honour of the sun, and Mons Jovis by the Romans—a name which survived through the middle ages as Monjou. In the third century the tides began to invade the low ground so that the Romans were forced to alter the course of their road. In the fourth century both the Mount and Tombelaine were isolated at high tide; and from the sixth to the eighth century the enlargement of the estuary where they stood proceeded rapidly. It is said that the great tides of 709 finally swamped the Forest of Scissey and made the great Bay of Cancale; but the Chausey islands were not severed from the mainland till the twelfth century.

History, or rather legend, takes up the tale somewhere about the sixth century, when certain missionary hermits came to live in the forests that remained and on the two mounts—St. Michel which was now called Mount Tumba and its lesser neighbour Tombelaine. Provisions used to be sent them by means of an ass, till the beast was devoured by a wolf, whereupon in answer to their prayers the wolf was converted, and patiently undertook the transport duty he had so thoughtlessly interrupted.

The Mount was desolate enough in those days. Mont-Tombe seemed just the name for it, though indeed etymology would refer us to nothing more than a hillock for the true meaning of *tum*, *tumulus*, and *Tumba*. But when at the end of the next century it became the property of St. Michael, human life began to beat upon it and human hands to fashion it to beauty. It was given to the Archangel in this way:—

A young noble named Aubert came into his inheritance, and immediately divided it into three equal parts. One part he gave to the Church, one to the poor, and the third he kept for himself. Then he took holy Orders, and consecrated his life to the service of God and men, till all the country talked of his sanctity, and when the opportunity came they made him Bishop of Avranches.

Now, Mount Tumba being a desolate place and yet within easy reach of Avranches, the Bishop repaired thither for rest and meditation; and when he was in retreat there and alone, the Prince of the Armies of the Lord appeared to him by night, and told him to build a sanctuary in his honour on the top of the Tumba. When day brake, Aubert was much puzzled to know whether it had been a mere dream or not. So he redoubled his prayers, fasting, and alms, and waited. A few days had passed by when the Vanquisher of the Infernal Serpent appeared again, and with some sternness repeated his command. But Aubert, remembering that we are told to try the spirits whether they are of God, did but continue to pray and wait. Then the Protector of Holy Church appearing a third time, reproved him severely, and for a sign touched the Bishop's head, leaving a hole in the skull where he touched it.

Aubert hesitated no longer, but began at once to build the Palace of the Angels. Now on the top of the Mount were two rocks, that stood in the way of the builders, and were so heavy that none could move them. So St. Michael appeared to a good peasant named Bain who lived near the coast, and told him to take his sons to the Mount and move the rocks. The peasant brought eleven of his children, leaving behind the twelfth who was an infant. But, try as they might, they could not stir the rock a hair's breadth. Then Aubert asked if the peasant had brought all, and he replied, "Yes, all, except for the baby who is with his mother."

"Go, my friend, and fetch him," said the Bishop, "for God often chooses the weak to confound the strong."

Bain fetched the child, and held him up in his arms so that he could touch the obstinate rock with his little foot. As he did so, it swayed and fell with a great roar down to the bottom of the Mount. There it lies under St. Aubert's chapel to this day.

Other miracles are related of the founding of St. Michael's great church. As that when St. Aubert was in doubt as to

where to build, a heavy dew fell on the Mount and left the space dry that was to be the site of the church.

But there were no relics as yet for the sacring, wherefore the Archangel told Aubert to send some monks to Monte Gargano in the kingdom of Naples, where the famous Apparition of St. Michael had taken place. The brothers received the Bishop's blessing, and departed on their long journey. They were lovingly received by the religious of Monte Gargano, who gave them two relics to carry back, a piece of the scarlet veil which the Archangel had left and a fragment of the marble on which he had stood. During their absence tradition says that the sea made its last great effort and completed the isolation of the Mount.

A crowd of people gathered in their train as they returned through France, and the story goes that one of them, a blind woman, recovering her sight at the last village on the coast, cried out, *Qu'il fait beau voir!* Wherefore that place is called Beauvoir to this day, as the map bears witness.

Then, in the year 709, St. Aubert made ready for the sacring. The relics were put in a casket on the altar, and the church was dedicated to the glorious Archangel. The Mount was called the Tombe no longer, but henceforward was known as *Mont-Saint-Michel-au-péril-de-la-mer*.

Still, the name of Tombelaine was sometimes applied to both mounts, and only gradually came to be confined to the remoter of the two.

With a name like Tombelaine in the mouths of a romantic people, it was inevitable that a story should grow up to provide an explanation of it in accordance with the peculiar etymology of such things. As a matter of fact there are two stories, and here is one of them.

A lady named Hélène was betrothed to a knight whom she deeply loved. But when William the Conqueror descended upon England, the young warrior set off to accompany him. Hélène stood on the Mount to watch his ship depart, and as

she saw all her happiness passing away across the waters her grief became greater than she could bear. She stood till she saw the white sails fade away at the horizon, and then fell dead. The monks with indulgent sentiment buried her where she had fallen; and every year on the anniversary of her death a white dove comes and hovers over the rock.

St. Aubert's skull became one of the most treasured relics of the abbey, and remained there till the Revolution, when a pious doctor saved it from destruction. At the beginning of the nineteenth century this doctor produced the relic from its hiding place, and gave it to the diocese of Avranches. It is now preserved in a reliquary at the church of St. Gervais in Avranches, and the hole which distinguishes it is of sufficiently unusual conformation to puzzle the osteologists.

For some time the Mount was only tenanted by St. Aubert's monks, but when the Normans began to ravage the coast, some fugitives fled for refuge to the rock, and founded the town which was destined to survive the convent. If the citizens of Mont-St.-Michel are anxious to claim a royal origin, they might put the cruel Hasting and Rollo by the side of the holy Aubert.

In 966, the monks, having become rich and corrupt, Duke Richard the Fearless replaced them by Benedictines. In 1017, Abbot Hildebert II. conceived the colossal scheme of building upon a platform brought up to the level of the top of the Mount by means of huge foundations. It is to him, therefore, that we owe everything, though he only lived to see the groundwork of a plan that it took five centuries to execute. His successors laboured on, preserving a unity of conception that was only possible in a religious community. In 1060, they are still at the substructure, though by 1080 they are building part of the nave; the Crypte de l'Aquilon was not made till after a fire in 1112.

With Robert de Torigny, who became abbot in 1154, begins the next great period of building; his abbatiate was a golden

age for learning and piety as well as architecture. But the western towers and porch which he made have since fallen, and little remains of his work but the buildings that lay below them.

In 1203, the Bretons burnt the town and all the abbey buildings on that side of the Mount. The Abbot, Jourdain, turning the loss to gain, planned out the Merveille, and by his death in 1212 had built the lowest story of that wonderful edifice—the Cellier and Aumônerie. Once more, the unity of the original conception was faithfully kept by succeeding abbots. Abbot Raoul des Isles (1212-18) continued the work, in spite of revenues cut off by spiteful Lackland ; and while the English barons were struggling for Magna Charta, the next story, the Salle des Hôtes and Salle des Chevaliers were a-building.

The next abbot, Thomas des Chambres (1218-25), went on with the top story of the Merveille, built the Refectory, and commenced the cloister. In 1228, the year of the canonisation of St. Francis, the cloister was finished. The whole Merveille had taken just a quarter of a century to erect.

It became increasingly necessary to protect so rich an abbey. Richard Tustin, abbot in 1236, had built by 1257 Belle-Chaise, the structure that covers the entrance and contains the Salle des Gardes. He also built the high Tour Nord, of the city ramparts. Needless to say, during the next century the work of fortification continued ; it was the age of the Hundred Years War, and early in the century the abbey received a garrison and a governor. In 1356 the English began the occupation of Tombelaine, and for years the Mount was in a state of siege. Then, in 1386, came another great abbot, Pierre le Roy. He built behind Belle-Chaise the tower that is called after him Tour Perrine ; and in front of Belle-Chaise he raised the formidable Châtelet, through which visitors still enter the abbey. He further protected the Châtelet with a barbican, now ruined, and a covered approach. After the Battle of Agincourt (1415) the English at Tombelaine became more threatening ; then Abbot Robert Jolivet completed the

ramparts, drawing the noble line of curtains and bastions from the Tour du Nord right round to the Tour du Roi at the entrance of the town. It is curious to think that all this work was done under the jealous eyes of an English garrison not two miles away.

In 1423, the English made a determined assault on the Mount, aided now by Jolivet, abbot, warrior, and traitor. They were repulsed. In 1434 (four years after the death of Jeanne d'Arc), they made a last supreme effort; eight thousand men attacked the heroic city, a breach was made in the Barbican; the English, rushing in, began to scale the town wall, when the garrison came out against them; another party dropped through the posterns of the eastern ramparts and took them in flank. After a combat of singular ferocity, the English were driven off. Two of their cannon lie in the Cour de l'Avancée, the first objects that a visitor sees.

When the Hundred Years War was over (1453), the abbey was well-nigh ruined by its efforts. Yet a great work lay before it; while the English were threatening (1421), the choir of the abbey church had fallen with a terrific noise, and now that peace had come at last, the Cardinal-abbot d'Estouteville made the crypt of the Gros-Piliers, laying thus the foundations of the magnificent Flamboyant choir. This was with the help of Louis XI., who founded the Order of St. Michael here in 1469, and held the first chapter of its knights in the Salle des Chevaliers. The Cardinal died in 1482, and two brothers, abbots in succession, Guillaume and Jean de Lamps, continued piling up the choir. By 1520 it was finished, and the crown laid on Mont-St.-Michel. It was only just in time. The new order in the person of François-Premier paid a visit to the Mount in 1518.

Decadence came in swiftly now with the commendatory abbots. The first of these wolf-shepherds, Cardinal Le Veneur (1523), anxious to increase his revenue, hit upon the ingenious plan of reducing the number of monks "to have less to

nourish." Then war settled again upon the abbey-fortress, the War of Religion. The Huguenots were attacking the abbey from without in 1591 (as you will read later on), while another commendatory Cardinal, de Joyeuse, was sucking its life-blood within. In 1615 a polite writer tells us that "God, regarding this poor abbey with favourable eyes, inspired the king, Louis the Just, to choose"—Whom do you think? Henri de Lorraine, a child of five years, to be its abbot. In 1622 came, here as elsewhere, the Reform of St. Maur. They were excellent men, these reformed Benedictines of St. Maur, but somewhat given to vandalism.

The abbey ended in an irony of hollow splendour. The last abbot was Cardinal Louis-Joseph de Montmorency-Laval, Bishop of Metz, and Grand Almoner of France. Then came the Revolution.

Whatever the virtues of the French Revolution, it was certainly deficient in humour as well as indifferent to beauty. The abbey was turned into a prison, and for the avoidance of superstition its name was altered to Mont-Libre!

Its first prisoners were three hundred aged priests; then in the nineteenth century came a succession of political offenders, among whom Barbès is famous for having jumped on to the rocks in a vain effort to escape. It was not till 1863 that the prison was suppressed, and by then the splendid pile was reduced to a state of almost hopeless ruin.

The period of restoration began in 1865, when the abbey was leased by the Bishop of Avranches who lent it to some missionary Fathers. In 1872 the Government took it over, and continued the works of restoration on an enormous scale. If we judge the case on its merits, I think it must be admitted that this restoration has been both necessary and intelligent. The place was too far gone structurally for mere passive preservation; but its detail, thanks to the hard granite, gave no excuse for destruction, and the building anew of those parts which had fallen gives us an opportunity of realising the

ensemble of this mason's mount. Other places have detail as beautiful, but nowhere else is there such an entirety.

Thus, the history of Mont-St.-Michel may be divided into three periods. In the first, it was ruled by an abbot, and that was the longest period. In the second, it was governed by a

Chez Poulard Aîné.

gaoler, and that period was sordid and short. Now, restored and frequented, it is the domain of King Poulard.

He presides over a fireplace of medieval splendour, where a dozen chickens turn slowly on two spits before a great log fire, while Madame, his Queen, receives us, her subjects, with that untiring, unruffled graciousness that is the mark of great personages. Yet King Poulard is not free from the misfortune which has beset so many Norman monarchs. His own flesh and blood are against him; and bitter is the feud between the retainers of the rival hotel-keepers, Poulard Jeune and Poulard Aîné. As an instinctive Legitimist I have always paid my court to the elder line; and of that I can say that, had the Bourbons levied no heavier taxes, no royal blood would ever have stained the guillotine, and this very Mont-St-Michel might have been Benedictine still. Indeed, one of the princely traits about the

Poulards is that you need not pay at all unless you like. When the time comes to take your leave, there is no bill: you have to remember what you have had. The system works well, "Every one is honest who comes to the Mont," said the genial waiter to me, "*St. Michel nous protège.*" Whereat I remembered one of the miracles that were wrought here in ancient times, thus described by old Dom Huynes in the heading of a chapter,—*Plusieurs personnes ayans disné et n'ayans de quoy payer leur escot, l'hostellier est payé miraculeusement.*"

When you arrive at the Mount you will naturally go straight up the single street of this most curious town. We will leave the abbey for the present then, turning off when we come to its entrance by the top of the street, and coming back by the ramparts.

The outer gate was once protected from the rush of cavalry by a palisade that ran across from the acute angle of the wall on our right, as we stand on the wooden bridge which now gives access from the road. At high tides visitors are brought in boats right through this gate and landed in the Cour de l'Avancée, the first court, where now is the stable for our bicycles. A glance round will show you what a tight place this Avancée was for an invader. The second gate leads into the Barbican, which opposed a second court to those who tried to force their way into the town. This barbican is now taken up by the Hôtel Poulard-Ainé: its kitchens and offices are on the left; on the right a multitude of modern pilgrims, with kodaks instead of gourds, sit at little tables over their *bocks* and absinthe. The third gate, the Porte du Roi, over which is a guard-room, has a fragment of portcullis still projecting from its outer arch: it leads into the town, the single street of old houses which were mostly hostelries for pilgrims ages ago, and are still devoted to a like purpose.

Still too, as of old the shops sell beads and shells and *objets de piété* to the crowds of strangers who pass between them; only the wares are now more numerous, and besides priests in

Porte du Roi, Mont-St.-Michel.

their cassocks, and countrymen in their blouses, and quiet nuns and fat matrons, there are Englishmen in Norfolk jackets, and Frenchwomen in immense knicker bockers to remind us that the world has moved. The curious old signs are gone, of the "Lycorne" which bestrides the street, the "Pot de Cuivre," the "Quatre-fils-Aymon," "La Truie que File" by the abbey

The Street, Mont-St.-Michel.

barbican, where the elders used to drink, and "La Syrène," though this last has its name written upon it. A house in the upper part of the town is famous as the residence of Du Guesclin's wife, but there is little left of it that has any interest.

The parish church rests its chancel on the street, and an archway underneath leads up to the cemetery. Many lamps and candles burn under the scutcheons and banners of its dark nave and single aisle, before the silvered St. Michael and before the black Madonna, which was set up in 1868 in the Crypte des Gros Piliers as a memorial of the original *Vierge Noire* that miraculously escaped the fire of 1112.

At the top of the street steps lead up to the abbey on our left. We can look over the ramparts, at the strange little forest

which so hardily covers the north side of the Mount under the grand pile of the Merveille. We are here on the *chemin-de-ronde*, and we will follow it as it goes downward along the ramparts which stretch round the eastern side of the town. It is a magnificent wall, of tremendous height at this its south-eastern part, swelling into great bastions here and there, and crowned with a beautiful machicolation throughout its length. We can peer down through the chinks (narrowed now in most places) of the machicolation, and see how the wall "batters" outwards at its base. In all the towers we can see the traces of the floors which divided them into stories, and the later embrasures which were made for the use of cannon; in some there are fireplaces. The first and highest of these bastions is the Tour du Nord; the next is the angular Tour Boucle, with its subsidiary bastion a little further on: then, having always the queer houses and yards of the town on our right, we come to a low separated tower, the Tour Basse, which was remodelled in the eighteenth century. The next is called the Tour de la Liberté; and then, when we have passed round a guard-house and watch-tower, a flight of steps from the roofed passage or alure round the Tour du Roi takes us down again to the Porte du Roi, and the domain of King Poulard.

All the way we have had a splendid view of the great bay, the Baie de Cancale; and it is from the Tour du Nord that we can best see one of the most striking sights of Mont-St.-Michel, the incoming tide. For we are near Granville, which is the point where the tides have wider scope than anywhere else on the coasts of Europe. The waters of the North Sea, concentrated by the resistance of the Côtentin, meet those of the Ocean off the Cap de la Hague and sweep down into the Bay of Cancale. At low tide the sea lies far away (more than seven miles) from the Mount, at the spring tides it rises as much as sixteen yards, and twice every day it has to cover the huge tract of sand, three hundred square *kilomètres*, in a few hours. It is estimated that the bay receives in six hours 1,345 millions of

Chemin de Ronde, Mont-St.-Michel.

cubic *mètres* of water, which comes in at the speed of a race-horse. This inward rush of the waters is called the *mascaret.*

At first all is still. The brown sands, scribbled over with blue rivers and tinged into bright green near the land, stretch out to the distant wooded shores of the bay, which sweep round from Avranches on its hill to the rocky headland of Carolles

that just hides Granville out of sight. The sea seems to lie far out of reach, and near its horizon are the Chausey islands, looking like a misty procession of dim sea monsters. Then gradually the water begins to creep round the solitary rock of Tombelaine, till it becomes an island ; though still the river at our feet runs busily seaward, as if determined to carry out its duties to the last moment. But it meets its old adversary at an edge of foam which is now gliding up rapidly from the distance, escorted by a cohort of white sea-birds. As the bore advances it spreads, tears over the crumbling banks of the vanquished river, throws thin films of water along the sand, rushes down little momentary water-falls to regain its level, and at last comes dashing up against the rocks of Mont-St.-Michel. Then it wheels round in turbid conquest of the sand, till it has covered all with a restless surface of water, flecked with foam. That water is now a light brown colour turning to blue, and on its surface the westering sun throws a shadow of the Mount,—the spire and the pinnacled apse, the Merveille, a tree, and the bit of rampart where we stand,—a huddled picture with the proportions of a monkish drawing in some old missal.

We have in our walk over the ramparts gained some idea of the abbey, and it will be best, before we go into it, to finish the survey by making a journey round the Mount, so that we may know where we are when we are taken over the complicated labyrinth of three stories which forms the abbey buildings. At low tide this journey can be made on foot, with the exception of two streams which are generally crossed on the back of a fisherman : at high tide visitors are rowed round in a boat, and unfortunate are those who miss this chance of seeing the waves beat on the rocky base of St. Michael in Peril of the Sea.

Before we start, let us look at the Mount from the road. We are on the south side : consequently the length of the church is before us on the top of the hill, its pinnacled choir on the right and its plain nave on the left of the new tower and spire. Beyond the nave stands the scaffolding by which

stone is drawn up for the restoration works on to the platform that lies before the west front. In front of the nave is the smaller platform called Saut Gaultier, where we shall stand anon. From the building on which this platform rests there runs the slope along which the great wheel drew up its charges: this fixes another internal point for us. The great square buttressed mass of buildings that lies under the church is the Petit and Grand Exil (so named in the prison days) which contain the Abbots' and the Governor's houses. The Grand Exil is marked by the arches that connect its buttresses; it stretches round on the south to a square tower, the Tour Perrine, beyond which can just be seen the slender arcade of Belle-Chaise which contains the Salle des Gardes where we shall wait for our guide later on. All the abbey buildings stand clear above the houses of the town, below which runs the machicolated outer wall, disappearing round the east side over the Tour Basse.

Our boat will start from the town gate, and go westward. We shall notice that the Mount has three sides: first a rocky side, then a wooded side, and then (as we come back to the road from which we started) the side of the town. First we pass the Barracks, built in 1828 for the prison soldiers, and now used by the workmen of the restoration. The old walls have gone at this part, but the Tour Gabriel remains; it dates from the sixteenth century, and is pierced with embrasures for three tiers of cannon; a windmill used to stand on it, but now it is used as a light-house.

Next, on a rock that projects from the Mount, is the plain chapel of St. Aubert, monument of the babe's miracle. Beyond the Chapel of St. Aubert lies the north side of the Mount, draped with its miniature forest. A stone hut on the shore covers all that remains of the Fontaine St. Aubert, the spring that arose at the prayer of the Saint, and formed the sole water supply of the monks down to the fifteenth century, when the cisterns were made. It was once protected by a strong tower,

and connected with the ramparts by an embattled staircase, so that the precious supply of water might be safe. The barrels were hauled along a boarding up the stairs, then rolled to the walls of the Merveille and hoisted up to the Cellar by the usual wheel-windlass. It is needless to say that the fortified fountain became valuable as an outpost and a sort of postern by which sorties could be made and supplies admitted. Fresh water has always been scarce at the Mount, and it is still bought and sold in the street, whither it is now brought from the neighbouring villages.

The Merveille, Mont-St.-Michel.

While we are on this north side we can fix for ourselves the plan of the Merveille. It is composed of two huge buildings, held up by buttresses that die away on to the "batter" at the base. The eastern building has a higher roof, which covers

the Refectory, easily recognised by its peculiar range of narrow windows close together. The story below this is the Salle des Hôtes, its lights in pairs between the buttresses that do not reach beyond this story, since their support is not needed for the light wooden roof of the Refectory. The lowest story is the

The Ramparts, Mont-St.-Michel.

Almonry. The western building has no roof, for its top story is the open cloister, marked by a row of very small windows. Below are the two tiers of windows which light the Salle des Chevaliers; the upper tier is varied by two circular openings, the lower by the two Tudor-looking bay-windows that give light and air to the isolated latrines—a triumphant combination of use and beauty. The lowest story is the Cellar, which is sufficiently lighted by plain narrow openings. The other buildings which we saw from the road are not shown to visitors, but the Merveille is; and it contains perhaps the finest Gothic rooms in the world. They are often misnamed, as

their original destination has been changed more than once, and it is easy to confuse them. Let us then be quite clear as to the arrangement :—

Refectory (Réfectoire).	Cloister (Cloître).
Salle des Hôtes.	Salle des Chevaliers.
Almonry (Aumônerie).	Cellar (Cellier).

Continuing our circuit to the east and south-east of the Mount, we are now on the town side, which is protected by the ramparts whereon we have already walked. Just over the Tour du Nord are the twin crenellated towers of the Châtelet which guards the entrance to the abbey ; and as we go round we see its east side, beyond which Belle Chaise comes again into view. Below the town we follow the outside of the walls with the Tour Boucle, its bastion, and the Tour Basse, the Tour de la Liberté, and the Tour du Roi, next to which is the road whence we started.

The external features of the Merveille are made perfectly clear by the elevations of M. Corroyer, which are also reproduced in M. Gout's book. By their study you can realise the perfection of this thirteenth century Gothic. It is the majesty of perfection that makes the proud strength of the pile more winning and more moving than all the triumphs of conscious decoration. What is there but just huge walls, and buttresses constructed to bear the thrust of vaults, and windows arranged to suit the purposes of a dining-room, reception and work-rooms, latrines, of a cellar for provisions, a cloister for exercise? There is not a feature that does not serve some necessary purpose, not a dimension that is not seemingly inevitable, given the stature of a man and the needs of a monastery ; no ornamentation, no straining after effect. The vanity and theatricalism of French art have not yet come to mar its logical power and lucid expression.

It is the same with the town ramparts that next come into sight. The architects seem to have had nothing in view but

the practical needs of defence and to have found beauty without seeking it. They wanted to make the Mount inviolable; and they succeeded utterly, for it was never taken. The beauty just happened. For beauty, the sense of form, of colour, of proportion, is natural to man, and only driven from the air we breathe by moral decay. Had the builders of these walls not set themselves with patience, courage, and singleness of devotion to their gigantic task, had avarice led them to stint the thoroughness of their masonry, or egoism broken the unity of their fellowship, the beauty would not have flowed into their work like this. They were free from the self-conscious vanity and shifting caprice which came in after years to throw a passing charm upon the face of architecture and to rot it at the heart. As the Renaissance developed, that momentary charm (which had indeed owed everything to traditions of honest workmanship) gradually fell away before the blindness of pride and the weakness of caprice, and was driven from the palace to the cottage, to survive only here and there in humble far-off things. This you may notice as you stand by the crowded shops in the Mount to-day, and find nothing beautiful to buy but the very cheapest kind of rustic Breton earthenware.

It would seem that nothing else but our own faults destroys the sense of beauty which should be a natural instinct. We often hear science set up, and the spread of invention, as our excuse. But if we used our inventions honestly, frankly, faithfully, they would not destroy the beauty of what we create. Indeed, there could be no better example of the scientific spirit than Mont-St.-Michel itself; science and art came to it as from one hand, and one hardly knows whether to call these medieval builders architects or engineers.

We are now ready to visit the abbey without becoming muddled. It is approached at present by the *chemin-de-ronde*, as the old fortified staircase, the Grand Degré, is in ruins. We stand first in the ruined barbican (not the town barbican, of course,

but that of the abbey), the outer line of defence. Before us are the twin towers of the fourteenth century Châtelet ; on our right is the eastern end of the Merveille with the graceful Tour des Corbins at its south-east angle. There was surely never devised a more imposing entrance to a castle than the Châtelet, through which the steps lead up to the Salle des Gardes. The interior of the Châtelet was a *salle de guet*, and there is a recess just outside the Salle des Gardes with a little window for observations. The Salle des Gardes, which we now enter, is an irregular chamber broken up by steps which follow the natural declivity of the rock : it has seats in the windows where the soldiers on guard could sit and watch the shores. It was built in the thirteenth century, and forms the lower story of Belle-Chaise,—of which the upper story is the Salle du Gouvernement where the officers of the garrison could meet to discuss their plans. In the Salle des Gardes we shall sit and wait for the guide who takes visitors round in small parties (between 8 and 11, 12.30 and 6), giving intelligent explanations at the more interesting points. The visit takes an hour : it would take twice as long if all the buildings were visited ; but, as it is, more is shown than can possibly be remembered, and we shall do well to make the tour more than once. There is no charge,—only an upturned palm at the end of the visit.

The main points in order of the visit are—Salle des Gardes (E), Saut-Gaultier (S.W.), Church, Cloister and Refectory (N. side), then down to the Crypte de l'Aquilon (N.W.), further down to the Cachots (the prisons), across under the nave by the Charnier to the great wheel (under Saut-Gaultier), back to the north side, Salle des Chevaliers and Salle des Hôtes ; Crypte, des Gros Piliers (under choir), then through the two lowest rooms of the Merveille and out through the Cour de la Merveille to the Salle des Gardes again.

Starting for the platform of Saut-Gaultier, we have the great buttresses of the apse on our right, and on our left the abbot's house and other dwellings known as the Grand and Petit

Entrance to the Abbey, Mont-St.-Michel.

Exil. They are not at present shown to visitors. Two bridges across the strange ravine gave the abbot access to the church; the stone one brought him to the *église basse*, the restored wooden one led to the *église haute*. Passing on the right a room with pretty windows and mouldings, we come on to the platform to look at the view of the coasts of Normandy and Brittany, which are separated by the little stream Couesnon.

The platform owes its name to a story that was told far back in the Middle Ages of—*un certain Gaultier, qui, désireux de montrer à son amante combien il la chérissait, se précipita du sommet d'un rocher très élevé dans les profondeurs de la mer, d'où il advint que ce lieu, qui se trouve en Normandie, est encore appelé Saut-Gaultier.* It was from here that Barbès tried to escape in 1842, but, having provided himself with too short a rope, was recaptured, much damaged by his fall.

The church is in the hands of the restorers, who have built a new tower and copper-covered spire, surmounted by a gilt statue of St. Michael by M. Frémiet (it is spirited but a bit theatrical), and are now engaged upon the upper part of the choir. The condition of the Norman nave shows how inevitable restoration had become: some of its capitals are in plaster, and its crumbling vault is a sham of plaster and wood. Only four bays remain; the foundations of the other three are under the pavement beyond the eighteenth-century west front.

This chapter is already too long for me to attempt a detailed description of the church and the buildings that cluster round it. Those who have the time must read the third part of M. Paul Gout's book, which I have already mentioned. It is one of the sanest and truest architectural criticisms in the French language. M. Gout uses the intimate knowledge he has gained in the work of restoration to explain the real structural significance of the various features. The public, for instance, goes into raptures over the lightness of the stone-work of the fifteenth century choir: yet its real excellence lies in a certain cunning sturdiness and simplicity that conspires with the hard nature of the stone. Again, in extolling the famous *Escalier de dentelle* of the choir, an ingenious and beautiful combination of flying buttress and staircase, people forget the main beauty of the exterior. The real interest, says M. Gout, lies much more "*dans la puissante tenue et l'expressive netteté de la conception générale.*" There is no decadent gracility in this example of

The Digue, Mont-St.-Michel.

late Gothic. Its triforium, so pretty in appearance, is really arranged just to give the surest support to the weight of vault above. The Norman builders, for all their massive masonry, could not risk the pressure of a vault upon their nave; but the later architects, with their finished science of thrust and counter-thrust, could throw up their vault at this great height, and rest the whole mass upon the buttresses and the Crypte des Gros Piliers. The effect at first sight is one of daring; but in reality it is due to an "*impeccable prévoyance.*" Everything shows (again to quote M. Gout) "*une pensée nette, une main sûre, une expérience consommée,*" as well as a perfect sense of form and proportion.

Visitors are taken from the church to the Cloister and Refectory, which form the top story of the Merveille (pp. 144–6). You have already studied it from the outside; now you can realise how it lifts up on its shoulders a platform which enabled the monks to walk from their church to their cloister just as if both lay upon the broad fields. The church lies poised upon the summit of the rock, four bays of its nave and one of its choir resting upon the rock itself, the remainder upon a floor that is supported by the eastern and western crypts. Thus the builders of the Merveille carried on Hildebert's daring plan of raising a great artificial table-land, and they meant to extend it even further by a chapter-house, the entrance to which you can still see on the west side of the Cloister.

It is not necessary to point out the extreme beauty of the sculpture which is lavished upon the Cloister; this, and the remarkable lavatory, and the little windows that look out upon the sea, you cannot fail to notice. Every one sees that the Cloister is one of the loveliest jewels of the Early French period. But notice also the wise disposition of the double arcade, by which the roof and arches (these last of Caen stone to admit of finer carving) are supported with absolute security upon the slender granite shafts.

The Refectory was used by the monks of St. Maur in the

seventeenth century as a dormitory, but there can be no doubt that it was originally built for meals, and it is probable that the dormitory then formed part of the building that once stood against the north aisle of the church; so that dormitory, cloister, lavatory, refectory, and church were all conveniently grouped on the wonderful plateau, to which a chapter-house was to have been added. Furthest from the door of the Refectory stood the abbot's table; near at hand the pulpit for the reader is contrived in the arcade, and at the south west corner there was a lift by which provisions could be hauled up or the leavings let down for distribution in the Almonry. Looking down the hall you will notice that, though it is full of light, no windows are visible. This beautiful effect is also governed by structural reasons. It was important not to lay more weight than necessary upon the lower stories of the Merveille. On one part there is the cloister which is light enough; but here a large roofed chamber had to be built. A stone vault would have been heavy, and besides the architect wanted all the height he could get out of the roof: so he made a plain barrel vault of wood. The pressure is therefore uniform on the walls, and not gathered up at certain points. What was wanted to resist this pressure was an unbuttressed wall of uniform thickness, and as light as possible. A man working with preconceived notions would have grouped his windows in the usual way between imaginary buttresses; but instead we find an unbroken range of narrow lancets, which reduce considerably the weight of the wall but leave it great horizontal strength. I feel sure the planner of this original device also remembered how beautiful would be the effect of distributed light when the work was done.

The Salle des Chevaliers, perhaps the finest Gothic chamber in the world, is under the Cloister, supporting the cloister floor on its vault. Whether it is named after the Order of St. Michael or the hundred and nineteen knights who came here to defend the Mount against the English, it seems certain that

it was built to serve as a great work-room for the monks. Here it was, with plenty of light and air, with immense fireplaces for winter months, and with sanitary arrangements that would satisfy the most exacting inspector of to-day, that they wrote and illuminated and studied the volumes which won for this abbey the name of the City of Books. Gothic principles of construction are here in full play ; the weight of the platform above is concentrated by the vaulting on to the pillars whose abaci take the ribs with so satisfactory an air of strength, and huge buttresses climb up the wall outside to catch the resultant side thrust. Gothic flexibility will be evident, too, when you notice that, in spite of its look of finished symmetry, the Salle des Chevaliers is irregular in shape. The vaulting of its northern aisle had to be so managed as to fit in with the receding wall that the older buildings under the transept had left. And it all had to be fitted into the native rock : this southern row of pillars does rest on the rock itself, while the two outer rows stand exactly over the pillars of the Cellier beneath, to which they transmit their burden through the distributing medium of another vault.

The other room of this second story has been fixed by M. Gout as the Salle des Hôtes, mainly because it communicated directly with the outside and with Belle-Chaise by means of its side porch, and was disconnected from the monastic quarters, the two staircases and the lift passing straight from the Almonry to the Refectory without discharging into this room on the way. It was once richly decorated, and its three large fireplaces, as well as the beauty of its single range of slender columns, point to its being intended both for comfort and for dignity. Here, then the great folk who flocked to the Mount were entertained with the ceremony due to their rank : they were forbidden by the rule of St. Benedict to enter the rooms reserved for the monks, but they could walk straight into this hall, leaving their attendants in the porch, after they had paid their devotions at the adjoining chapel of Ste. Made-

Town and Abbey, [illegible] St. Michel.

leine. Like the other parts of the abbey, the Salle des Hôtes was afterwards defaced and partitioned for the various purposes to which it was applied. Under the commendatory abbots, when discipline was so loose that men and women were allowed to wander everywhere, it became a *plomberie*, where the lead was worked for covering the innumerable stages and roofs of the abbey. This name has stuck to it, as has also that of Réfectoire ; for the monks of St. Maur divided it by a wall into kitchen and refectory when they turned the real refectory overhead into a dormitory. In the eighteenth century it became a factory (as did also the Salle des Chevaliers a little later) ; then it became a habitation of gaolers, and lastly the dormitory for the fifty soldiers of the garrison.

The Cellar has three aisles of very unequal width, because its pillars have to stand directly below those of the Salle des Chevaliers, while the width of the place is reduced by the spread of the rock. Furthermore, its height has to be greater than that of its neighbour, the Almonry, because the Salle des Chevaliers is not so high as the Salle des Hôtes, which is over the Almonry ; and the vaults of those two Salles have to be on a level to secure the uniformity of the top platform. This extra height of the Cellier is the reason of its internal buttresses and massive pillars. Nothing is sought here but unadorned strength : the one ornament, the impost or rudimentary capital of the pillars, was necessary in order to support the wooden centering on which a vault is built. The place is just a cellar, admirably suited for storing provisions. They were brought in through an opening under the second window, the hauling being accomplished by a great wheel similar to that in Notre-Dame-sous-Terre. You can see outside the window an arch which is set between the two buttresses ; on this a little draw-bridge rested, projecting sufficiently to allow the rope to drop clear of the batter of the wall. You have already seen from the outside how this winding apparatus was

also used to draw up the barrels of water from the Fontaine Saint-Aubert into the Cellar.

During the Huguenot siege of 1591 it was the cause of a weird adventure. Two versions have come down to us, of which I will give you one.

There was a certain *meschant et abominable criminel* named Goupigny, who had somehow escaped from Caen, where he lay under sentence of death, and had taken refuge in St. Michael's Abbey with the Governor Beausuzay. The Huguenots under the Sieur de Sourdeval and the Sieur de Montgommery (son of him of Domfront fame), had failed in every attempt to capture the impregnable Abbey, when Goupigny came to them and promised for 200 crowns to admit them into the stronghold by means of the provision lift. Having concluded his bargain with the besiegers, he went back and explained his little plan to the besieged. How many degrees deep he was in treason we do not know, but we may imagine that his views as to the religious controversies of the day were impartial, and that he intended all along not to run the risk of his asylum changing hands.

On the night arranged—it was the Feast of Michaelmas—at eight o'clock, when the monks were chanting their office, the Sieurs de Sourdeval and Montgommery crept up to the foot of the embattled staircase from the Fontaine Saint-Aubert, with two hundred men, hoping to introduce death through the door which had so often admitted the means of life. The double traitor, Goupigny, stood above at his post by the windlass, and called down to the Huguenots to come up, since all was safe. Then there was a rush for the rope, who should be the first to enter ; and as they caught hold of it, two and three at a time, Goupigny entered the wheel and drew them up. As they reached the doorway, they were led quietly within and stabbed by the Governor's men. Thus there went seventy-eight of them, one by one, to their doom, and the garrison amused

themselves by cutting up their bodies like faggots. One only they spared, a trusty man named Rablotière, foreseeing that he might be useful later on.

At length the Huguenots began to wonder at the great silence that reigned above; for they could not understand that the Abbey should be so easily taken. "Are we masters of the place?" they called to Goupigny; and when he answered that they were, they ordered him to throw down the body of a monk as a sign that all was well. So the Governor slipped a monk's dress over one of the dead Huguenots and flung it down to them.

Then the Sieur de Sourdeval was merry, and called to his colleague, "*Allons, Montgommery, c'est à bon;* see how the monks fly!" But the Sieur de Montgommery was more prudent, and begged the other not to go up till they had some further proof; and, since he knew that their man Rablotière could be trusted to the death, they called up for him that he should speak to them. Now the Governor, as we have seen, had spared Rablotière, hoping to put him to some use; he brought him, therefore, to the wheel, and promised to let him go free if he would call down to his master that all was well. But the brave man was faithful to death, and instead of saying as he was bid, he cried out to the Huguenots that they were betrayed.

Here the lurid story begins to brighten. There was no more bloodshed. The horror-struck Huguenots hurried away. The Governor was touched to the heart by Rablotière's splendid act, and gave him back his life for his loyalty. Goupigny, on the other hand, did not long survive to chuckle over his cunning; for he was soon after killed on Tombelaine "*et alla rendre compte devant le Souverain Juge de ses abominables forfaits.*" In a few months, the Governor, who was more of a soldier than a theologian, joined the other side, and the Huguenots did not refuse to shake "that hand so terribly imbrued." The bodies of the murdered Huguenots were buried just outside the trap where they had been caught, and their remains were found during the recent restoration. The two halls, the Cellier

and the Aumônerie, bear the memory of the event in the name that is often given them of *Montgommeries*.

The Almonry (Aumônerie) is the last place that visitors are shown, and still retains this much of its original purpose that the guide receives his tips as visitors leave it. Situated near the entrance of the abbey, it was always well adapted for the reception of the crowds of poor folk who came up for alms; the monks, as we have seen, could send down food straight from the refectory through the lift in the wall at the south-west corner, and could also come down to this humble reception room without touching the intermediate Salle des Hôtes where the grand people were received. Only the narrow Cour de la Merveille (now given up to photographs and such like) separates the doorway of the Aumônerie from the Salle des Gardes whence you started on your rounds.

I have omitted the crypts and other buildings of the under-world which visitors are taken to on their way between the stories of the Merveille. The Crypte de l'Aquilon and the Promenoir are interesting examples of the development of Norman architecture in the first part of the twelfth century. The lower, the Crypte de l'Aquilon (which is reached by a fine staircase from the Promenoir) is the earlier of the two; it has monolithic pillars, and a groined vault; but the masonry is so fixed and massive that the square-edged arches which apparently support it have really nothing to do, and in some places have become quite detached from it. This structural anomaly is remedied in the Promenoir, where the groins are supported by ribs, and the true principles of Gothic economy appear; yet even here the walls are still in the old massive form, as if they had to carry a heavy barrel vault, instead of their strength being concentrated at the points where the vaults throw their weight. The Promenoir served as a cloister before the Merveille was built.

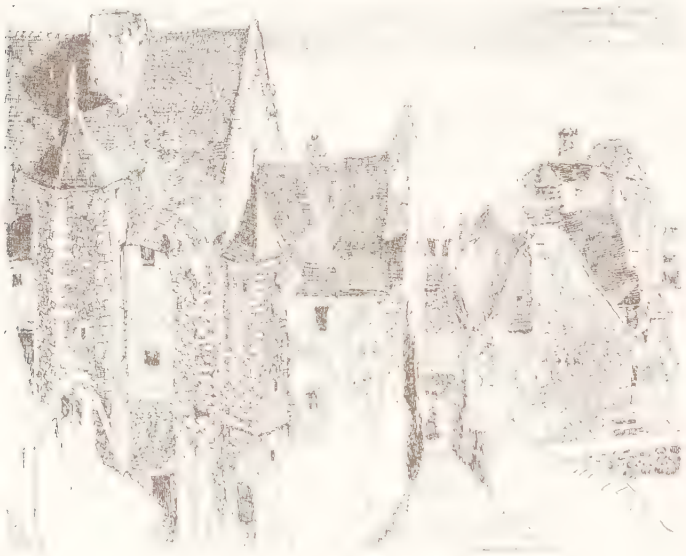
You will next be taken further down to the *Cachots*, the hideous and awful dens which are mainly attributable to that

sinister prince of dungeons, Louis XI. I almost wish they were not shown, for they crowd out the glories of the abbey in the memory of nearly every visitor. "Mont-St.-Michel," people will say, "Oh, yes, it's on a hill, and there are horrid dungeons and a great wheel." Yet one terrible piece of history must be told, that of Dubourg, who was kept down here in a cage, if only because you are certain to hear it turned inside out by some amateur of romance.

Posterity has been much kinder to Dubourg than he was to his contemporaries. It has painted him as an inflexible hero, a Dutch Protestant who was torn from his loving family by Louis XIV. But as a matter of fact, he was born in the first year of Louis XV and, therefore, could not have been imprisoned by the Great Monarch. He was a scoundrelly blackmailer, and therefore not a hero who for conscience sake refused to stay his pen. He was a Catholic, and therefore not a Protestant. He was a Frenchman of good family, and therefore not a Dutchman. He was a bachelor, and therefore his farewell letter to wife and children is a figment. He was not caged in iron for five years as the guide-books say, but in wood for one year and ten days.

Dubourg started as a brilliant young writer in Paris; then he mixed himself up in politics, hid away in Frankfort, and from that asylum wrote venomous libels against the French court, under the pseudonyms *L'Espion Chinois* and *Mandarin*. He was not the first to satirise his countrymen under the guise of an intelligent Oriental travelling in Europe; Montesquieu had published the *Lettres Persanes* when Dubourg was a boy of six, and indeed this form of literature had become fashionable. But his satire was far from being of the usual innocent description. He took German pay, and he was not ashamed to ask openly for blackmail. "There is only one way," he wrote in one his publications, "to make the pen drop from my hands, and that is to dazzle my eyes with gold." He took no pains, however, to conceal his identity. The French agents easily tracked

him to his hiding place, arrested him, and brought him to Mont-Saint-Michel in 1745. He soon discovered that it was useless to deny his writings. Indeed he behaved very gently, realising at once



A Passage, Mont.-St. Michel.

that his case was hopeless, though he could hardly have imagined the fate that was in store for him.

He was put into one of those cages which still existed in France. The horrible things had been invented by Cardinal Balue for Louis XI, and that monarch, when he discovered Balue's treachery, shut him up for ten years to meditate upon the ingenuity of his own invention.

These cages were made of thick wooden bars, strengthened inside and out with iron bands, and so close together that a man's hand could not pass between them: they were only seven or eight feet in height and width. Dubourg's cage was put in a dark cave, where the cold and damp were so awful that his questioners

could not bear it during their investigation. The monks were kind to him; they made him some warm woollen clothing, and placed planks on the top of the cage to prevent the water dripping straight on to his body. There he lived alone, caged up in the gloom for a year, till he went mad. For twelve days he refused to eat, and then died "*sans repentir, et en désespoir, après avoir déchiré tous ses habits.*"

The Charnier, or Charnel-house, was the burial-place of the monks, who were laid there in quick-lime. It formed the crypt of the three vanished bays of the nave.

In the Chapelle des Trente Cierges, or Notre-Dame-sous-Terre, is the great wheel. It was made during the modern prison times, and was worked by the prisoners themselves, but it is on the model of the ancient ones, and was used like them to draw up provisions by means of the *poulain*.

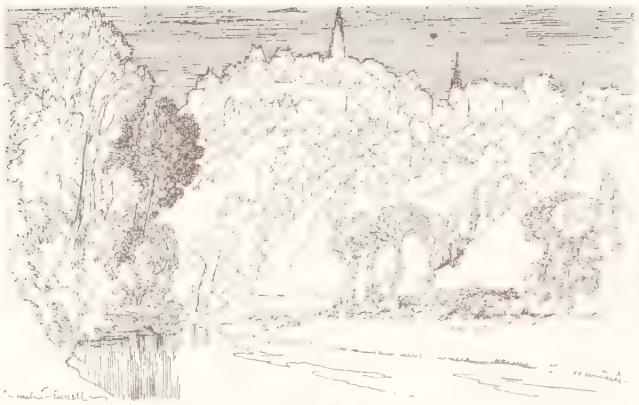
The Crypte des Gros Piliers, called also the *Église Basse* to distinguish it from the church itself which was called *Église Haute*, is the strong and beautiful undercroft of the choir. It was used as a chapel, and in it was kept the wooden statue of our Lady which had miraculously escaped from the fire of 1112. In recent times another statue was placed here, as we have seen (p. 138).

I should like to end this chapter with something cheerful, and therefore will tell you the story of another Huguenot attempt upon the Mount. It was in 1577, some time before Montgommery's failure, that a Protestant chief, Le Touchet, conceived a daring stratagem for securing the impregnable fortress. He established himself some two leagues from the Mount, and sent on a body of about twenty soldiers disguised as merchants. The audacious band arrived at the city gate as pilgrims, laid down their arms according to custom, and then put up their horses, abstracting from their packs another set of weapons which they concealed about their persons. It is significant of the manners of sixteenth century pilgrims that they next proceeded to carouse with the soldiers of the garrison

Within the Gates.

without exciting any suspicion. The following morning these worthies went up to the church and heard several Masses with great devotion. Some then joined their good friends of the garrison to continue their revels of overnight, three went down

into the town to be ready for Le Touchet when he arrived, the others stayed to enjoy the view on Saut-Gaultier. It was now half past eight of the morning, and Le Touchet was to arrive at nine. But the adventurers discovered that a young novice of the abbey had detected their errand; and deeming that it would now be fatal to wait, they drew out their arms and set upon the garrison, killing one and disarming the rest. And now in the glory of success they began to lose their heads; for, seeing Le Touchet approaching the town with his men, they raised a cry of *Ville gaignée! Ville gaignée!* This imprudent act gave the alarm to the town, which assumed so threatening an aspect that Le Touchet retired leaving his gallant pioneers to their fate. Their command of the abbey, however, saved them; and when they surrendered in the afternoon, they were allowed to go quietly away, without their arms but with "*quelque argent monoyé qu'on leur donna par composition.*"



Avranches.

CHAPTER VII

AVRANCHES, GRANVILLE, COUTANCES, SAINT-LÔ

I CANNOT help thinking that Avranches is a rather over-rated place, and I do not understand why so many English people stay there. It lies prettily on a hill, surrounded by pleasant country, it is clean and bright, and has good shops and a View, but its situation is not so good as that of the towns we have just been passing through, its surroundings are nothing very wonderful, and the sea is at some distance. With the exception of a bit of the old fortified city at the north, there is nothing much to see in the town itself; and as for the View we can easily enjoy it on our way from Avranches to Granville. The town was once an important military post, and was called in the time of the religious wars L'Allumette de La Ligue. In 1639 it was occupied by Jean-nu-Pieds, the mysterious individual who commanded the Armée de Souffrance, which rose against the salt-tax in the seventeenth century. Misery had forced the Norman peasantry to insurrection; they were crushed by taxation, their villages were deserted, and many of them had in desperation become brigands. Yet there was a trace of the old separatist tradition about their revolt; it was political as

well as social—an attempt to free the province of Normandy from the domination of the Kings of France and when Jean Va-nu-pieds marched on the ancient capital of Rouen he was received with sympathy. But the French crown was not the weak thing it had once been. The Cardinal de Richelieu was its servant, or its master, and he struck, as was his wont, without mercy. The Parlement of Rouen was speedily crushed; and Gassion, Maréchal de France, was despatched to Avranches with 4,000 men. The insurgents made a desperate resistance here; establishing themselves behind a barricade, they kept the royal troops at bay for five hours. They fought till only ten of them were left alive, and then Gassion, with hateful refinement of cruelty, determined to disgrace as well as destroy the brave survivors. He offered to spare the life of any one who would consent to act as hangman to the others. So it was: nine laid down their lives and one his honour.

Still Avranches had not seen the last of civil war. In the struggles of the Chouannerie it was taken by royalists and republicans in turn, and when the Revolution was over, it had lost both its ancient bishopric and its cathedral church.

Suppose then that we "do" Avranches on our way to Granville, with the brutal celerity of the tourist. Our road will bring us into the town at the Boulevard du Sud; and in this we shall have the better of the traveller by rail, who climbs up to the Plate-forme; for near us on the left is the Jardin des Plantes, whence is the famous view of the great bay where Mont-St.-Michel stands out in the distance like a broken pyramid. On the north side of the Jardin, which is much admired for its brown grass and garish geraniums, is the pretty convent of the Ursuline sisters: it was built in the seventeenth century for the Capuchins, whose garden this was. The excellent Joanne provides a map which will guide us to the Plate-forme, where is an inferior edition of the View. It is the site of the cathedral, which before the Revolution crowned so finely the hill of Avranches. A pillar of the doorway is all

that remains. It bears an inscription telling us that here, before this portal, King Henry II. knelt to receive absolution for the murder of Becket.

Washing-place, near Avranches.

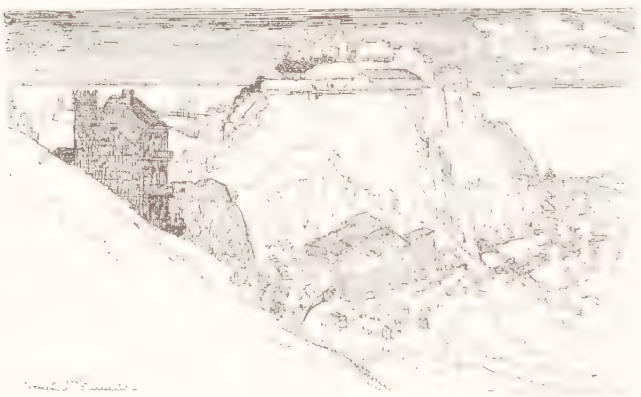
There is not much of interest in the *ci-devant* Bishop's Palace except the chapel, which is now the *salle des pas-perdus* of the Palais de Justice. The modern churches of Avranches need not detain us; but we must see the old streets, the fragment of the castle, and the remains of the city walls which lie between the Hôtel de Ville and the Promenoir. There is in especial one fine gate-tower to recall the past glories of Avranches, and we can ride down from here along the Boulevard du Nord under the old ramparts till we turn into the Route de Villedieu and the Route de Granville with the last and best impression of Avranches. From here to Granville is a pleasant ride of twenty miles, and on our

way we can turn off to see the beautiful ruins of the Abbey of la Lucerne.

What a relief it is, after dusty roads and the stifle of streets to reach the sea, the real sea. Mont-St.-Michel is not the sea-side; it is a prodigy in a bay. But Granville is a watering-place, and the greens even of green Normandy seem dull as we look at the sheet of infinite emerald which we call the English Channel. For we have come straight through the big street of the *Ville Basse*, and are standing in the narrow passage between the rocks, the Tranchée-aux-Anglais, so called because it was cut by the English when they occupied the commanding Rock of Granville in the days of Henry VI. Now it is the centre of Granville's gaiety. Fat gentlemen at little tables are drinking *apératifs* to give them an appetite for the dinner which the Hôtel des Bains provides at so moderate a price; officers in cherry-coloured trousers jostle more fat gentlemen in bathing costume; little boys hawk about that extraordinary paper the *Petit Journal*, and young ladies with hats cocked well over their foreheads look down from the terrace of the Casino with the indefinite air of lassitude and superiority that the payment of a franc brings in its train. If it is high tide, we can jump straight into six feet of the green water. If it is low tide we can walk out upon an incredibly broad beach which spreads away right and left into the distance from the Tranchée-aux-Anglais. No wonder the sea can drop away so far, for there is sometimes a difference of forty-six feet between high and low tide.

It is from the beach when the tide is out that we can see Granville, the real Granville, *la Ville Haute*, that lies so characteristically upon its black rock. It stretches, a long narrow peninsula, right out into the sea, almost, indeed, surrounded by water, and cut off from the tamer mainland by this same Tranchée-aux-Anglais. Its old houses cluster on it for all the world like black crystals; and towards its extremity a few larger ones are thrown out, which we can guess to be barracks. The

strong subdued spire of Notre-Dame breaks the uniform crystallisation, and a wheel, signal for the sailors, sticks out oddly at the end, in case we should ever forget the aspect of this most characteristic of sea-towns. The beach is covered with men and children who are digging rapidly in the sand for the active silvery little fish called *lançon*, who has to be seized quickly and thrown into a basket before he can disappear



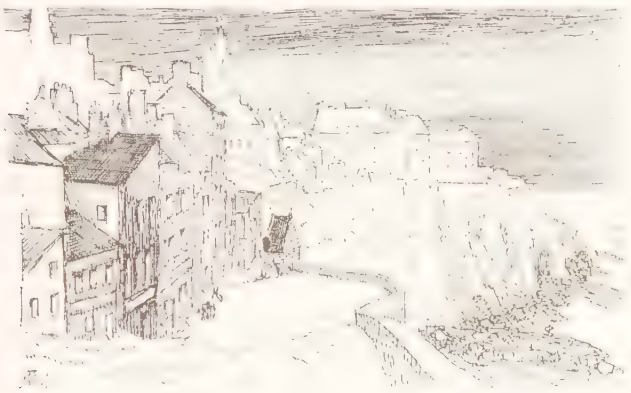
Le Roc de Granville.

again as by magic into the sand. The flat fields of rock, too, are rich with what our schoolbooks used to call the treasures of the deep, hermit-crabs and anemones, and unknown sea-plants. Children hunt for shells in the sand, and sail their boats in the cool, shallow pools. The fisher-folk bait their lines for the witless sole, and search the nets for the fish they have intercepted at the ebb of the tide, throwing out contemptuously the white cuttle-fish, who, poor things, can only retort by squirting their ink futilely over the sand; but the cuttle-fish has a small cousin in these waters, a strange, bright-red creature with green eyes, who spits for all he is worth, and is none the less taken away to be eaten.

A little suspension bridge spans the Tranchée and leads up

through modern fortifications to the Rue Notre-Dame, which runs through curious stone houses to the church. This is the old town, which stands aloof from the gaieties of Granville, unchangeable and unspoilt. Soon Notre-Dame comes into view, and behind it, on the right, the dormered roof of the fine old barracks.

Notre-Dame, is the mother of Granville, stone of its stone, like it in its sombre strength, which is but slightly lightened by



Old Town, Granville.

the thick-set spire that dare not tempt the winter storms too much. Even the pomp of Louis XIII assumed a sober rusticity when it came to the west front and side portals of Notre-Dame de Granville, a rusticity that gives a fresh charm and a homely dignity to its columns and entablatures, for all that the columns of its northern doorway are of the quaintest irregularity.

Even in summer time it is almost black inside the grave church, and only after a while does one discern fisherwomen in the Granvillais cap, and nuns, here and there in prayer. For the place is low and unusually long, and the small windows that are pierced in the bare walls of the Norman choir have been

continued in the later extensions of the primitive building. The unity between Romanesque, Flamboyant, and Renaissance parts is indeed the peculiarity of the church. Next to the apse, where the capitals are carved with rough foliage, are two bays of the same date but with plain caps ; here the break in the masonry and arches across the vault proclaim that the choir once ended. But there are now more bays of it, built in exactly the same way only that suaver mouldings take the place of the earlier

The Harbour, Granville.

torus, and the soffits of the arches are no longer angular. Then comes the nave, with the same round pillars, the same plain wall-space above, pierced with the same low pointed windows —but in the classical style! It is very charmingly done, this Renaissance adaptation : the caps have their square abaci with projecting corners, and there are square-edged vaulting shafts. But the builder of the nave was less ambitious than he who extended the choir, and the result is that the choir is both broader and longer than the nave. Add to this the rough wooden pews, which only a sailor could sit in, and it is plain that Granville church is as characteristic as Granville town.

Beyond the church lie the barracks, old and new, (how

inferior are the new!) and beyond them an open space, a rope walk, a powder magazine guarded by a sentry, and a lighthouse where the rock strikes downwards to stretch its black fingers out into the sea. Here at the head of the promontory is a wide view over the water, north, west, and south: it is like standing on the deck of a great ship. On one side ending in the Rocher de Cancale is the bay where Mont-St.-Michel lies hidden; on the other, the shores wind round in the direction of the great Côtentin peninsula. Nearer at hand, at a distance of seven miles, is the strange archipelago called the Îles Chausey, which you can easily visit from Granville. Some two hundred and fifty of its three hundred islands sink beneath the wave at high tide. At all times it is a queer desolate place; only one island is inhabited, and the natives live by selling granite and lobsters,—or try to live, for the archipelago was brought up by a speculator who seems to have founded there a complete tyranny. On the south side of the Roc de Granville is the harbour, three basins protected by a great jetty. And what harbour is not interesting? The jetty, by the way, is of Chausey granite, and so are the pavements of Paris.

The road to Coutances runs up from the Tranchée-aux-Anglais and takes leave of the sea after about five miles. At Quettreville, a village which seems to be all inns, there is a good unrestored church with a very satisfactory early French spire; it is worth while looking up at this spire from close under the north side. After a while Coutances comes suddenly into view, lying on the slope of its hill, the Cathedral behind St. Pierre, where the planes of several hills intersect each other. It is St. Pierre that we reach first as we climb up the street whose houses seem on the point of slipping down in one great avalanche to the valley.

St. Pierre is a strange commentary on the Cathedral. The great church belongs to a period of freshness and vigour, the smaller springs from an age of disillusionment. In its western tower Flamboyance and Classicalism fight for victory, throwing

off much pretty stonework in the struggle, and the Renaissance triumphs by capping it with a pretty series of cupolas. The central tower is more remarkable: the lower part, the lantern that we shall see from the inside, is correct and serious work. It was built in 1550; but in 1580 another man was called in to finish it, and he did his work as if in contempt of his predecessor, surmounting a crowd of pilasters and consols with a spire that looks as if some giant had come and squashed it. The whole is an architectural joke, and a very quaint and delightful one too. Within, the church relies almost entirely upon a series of fantastic gallery fronts for its decorative effect; but its most interesting feature is the lantern of which we have already seen the outside. It is very impressive, very well proportioned: although the conscientiously arranged classical detail is a little hidden in this position, and some of the parts project rather too much for others to be well seen from below, we cannot help feeling admiration as well as surprise at this ingenious attempt to adapt the new architecture to an old purpose.

The Cathedral is justly regarded as one of the finest in France. It is so typical an example of the Early French style in all its purity and strength that one is amazed to think that, even in the fifties, there should have been any discussion as to whether it belonged to the eleventh or the thirteenth century. The nave chapels alone brought to a complete building of the first half of the thirteenth century some slight modifications of the next age.

The air of distinction which marks the Cathedral, is best shown in its three towers. The two at the west are almost alike—not quite, though, for when could a Gothic architect suppress his inventiveness enough to effect an exact reproduction? They have scaly stone spires, and a little stone pyramid caps each of the multitude of slim turrets which cluster round the large towers and round the two subsidiary stair-towers at the external angles. The little turrets are adorned

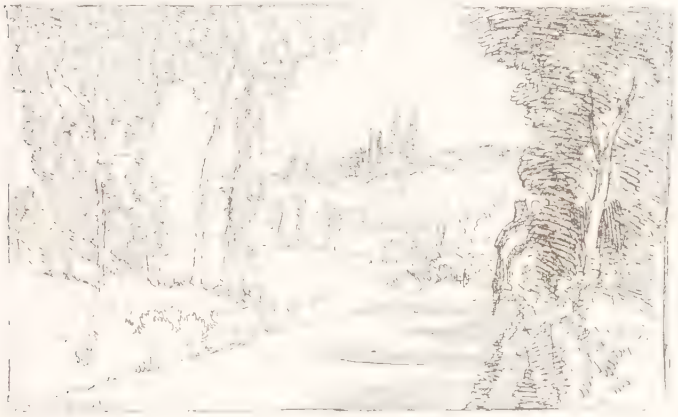
Spire of St. Pierre, Coutances.

The Cathedral, Coutances.

with long narrow shafts which give a special charm to the whole mass ; as if the masons were rejoicing to emphasize the distance they had now travelled from the horizontal lines and stout pillars of Norman times. The huge unusual central tower, called *le Plomb*, is just one great story, though there is a half-concealed division in the openings within the high arches which cover its eight sides. A turret blocks the arch on the external sides ; and the whole is simply finished with a quatre-foiled parapet. A noticeable peculiarity of this tower is the little isolated waves of stone that decorate the wall spaces between the shafts.

Past the wide arch of the south porch an alley leads to the Bishop's house ; near which one can see the peculiarities of the eastern

part of the church. There is no transept; or, rather, what transept there is does not project beyond the nave chapels; but there is instead a building of unusual shape which looks like a vestry from without, though it turns out to be really a vaulted chapel. The strong, one might say the muscular arms of the flying buttresses spring up from broad



Coutances.

walls of stone, with the exception of one that rests on a tall square turret (which has no apparent purpose to fulfil), and stretches to a similar turret in the choir: between these two is the little round turret which is a conspicuous feature inside the aisle.

Perhaps, after the striking effect of the outside, there is a slight feeling of disappointment on entering the nave. It is a bit smaller than one expected, and the choir seems short and broad; the grouping of the shafts in the nave is stiff, especially that of the three vaulting shafts. For the rest, the nave has parapets both to its triforium and clerestory, and between the arches of the former are round panels of carved foliage. But as we go eastward the place wins us more and more by its originality. The choir has very

high pier arches, and a plain tract of wall rimmed with a parapet takes the place of a triforium: the apse, broad as it is, is formed of very narrow and tall coupled round pillars. The vaulted lantern is like an octagonal church set up aloft, with a sort of parapeted triforium resting on a tall parapeted arcade, and a clerestory of lancets above; but in contrast with that of St. Pierre every detail is distinct and telling, down to the enriched mouldings on which its parapets rest.

But it is in the ambulatory and chapels of the choir that the original genius of the unknown architect finds its fullest expression. They stand on a lower level than the choir, and sweep round it like two curved aisles. The outer aisle has angular swellings which form shallow chapels; the inner one, or ambulatory, has its own clerestory, triforium, and pier arches. There are thus three ranges of vaulting, that of the choir, ambulatory, and outer aisle, descending like three steps. In the ambulatory the small round turret which we noticed from the outside comes through the vault to end in a singular encorbelment, which looks like a sort of blind oriel and is decorated with beautiful arcading, as, indeed, is all this part of the church.

One cannot help being sorry that this remarkable building has not come down to us just as it was first designed; but criticism is disarmed by the beautiful tracery of the Decorated nave chapels, and the exceedingly light screens that separate them from each other.

There is another church at Coutances, that of St. Nicholas. It has a character of its own, and little classical details peep out in the capitals of the choir to testify that it is a seventeenth century addition on the lines of the earlier nave.

Coutances is a good place wherein to make a stay, not only for its own sake, and that of the valleys and hills around it, but because of the many interesting excursions that can be made from this centre; such as the ruined abbey of Hambye, the manor of La Haye-du-Puits, the grand Norman abbey church

Coutances.

of Lessay, and the strange sad desert called the Lande de Lessay, which is passed through on the way. One could go further and explore the whole Côtentin, the remains of abbey and castle at St. Sauveur-le-Vicomte, the old *hôtels* and church of Valognes, and Cherbourg itself.

And then Coutances has an aqueduct. True, its buttresses and pointed arches deny a Roman origin, but probably an earlier aqueduct did cross the western valley in the days when Coutances was called Constantia; and this one, whose mantle of ivy makes one forget that it was used until about two hundred years ago, is all the more remarkable because it is medieval.

The Côtentin affords a striking illustration of the bloodshed in the Wars of Religion. The *Cahiers de Doléances*, drawn up at Coutances in 1580 give the number of persons executed or killed at 12,082 in the Côtentin alone: this slaughter seems to have been pretty evenly distributed, for it included 128 Catholic and 162 Calvinist gentlemen, 11 priests, 16 religious, and 6,200 Protestant soldiers.

On St. Lawrence's day, 1561, the Huguenot leader, Colombières, marched into Coutances and pillaged the town. An old writer, Ronault, in an obviously exaggerated account speaks of the "*cris confus des hommes qu'on égorgoit, des femmes qu'on violoit, des prêtres, religieux, et religieuses qu'on massacroit, et de toute la populace qu'on passoit au fil de l'épée.*" Anyhow they ill treated the newly-appointed bishop, Arthus de Cossé, after trampling on the Sacrament and making a bonfire (at which he had to assist) in the Cathedral. The poor man was gagged, set backwards on an ass with the tail in his hands for bridle; a paper mitre was stuck on his head and a petticoat round his body in lieu of a cope. Luckily when they had taken him round the town in procession, the joke of the thing disarmed them of hatred, and they forgot the contemplated gibbet, throwing him into prison instead. A month later some friends managed his escape, and he left Coutances disguised as a

miller's man. Outside the town a few cavaliers awaited him and brought him to Granville. There the inhabitants protected him, and refused to give him up to the Huguenots, although they threatened a pillage ; for Granville was confident in its seagirt rocks, its double walls and bastions and demi lunes.

Seven months later, when the storm was past, Arthus returned

Coutances.

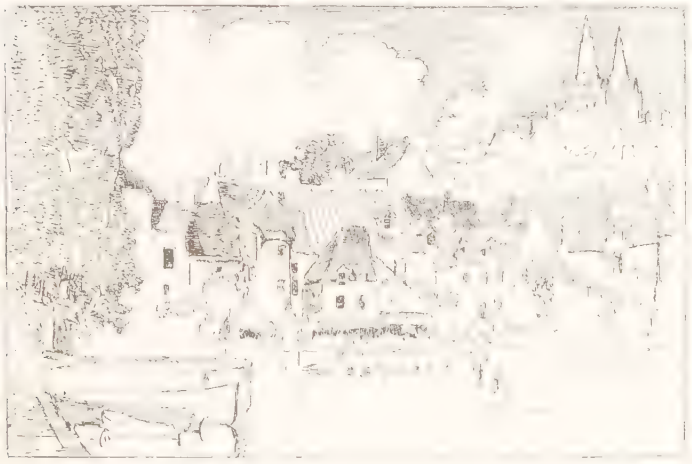
to Coutances and held his first synod, though the church was half in ruins, and the canons were so poor that they had no winter clothes. In 1566 we find Colombières pillaging there again. In 1570 the unhappy Arthus found that Cathérine de Médicis expected the clergy to pay for putting down schism. He was taxed to the extent of four hundred *écus d'or*, but could in no wise raise the money. He went therefore to Mont-St.-Michel (of which place he had lately been made commendatory abbot), in the company of a jeweller, to whom he proposed to sell the abbot's crozier for ten thousand *écus*. The monks were on the point of consenting, when Jean the Prior (one can spare him some sympathy) ran furiously up to the Bishop-abbot, and hit him on the cheek, crying—"The Devil shall take Abbot

Spires of St. Lô.

rather than the Abbot take the crozier!" Poor Arthus gave up the bauble, and proceeded to lay a complaint before the Parlement at Rouen. But, unfortunately, the Prior was of as good family as he, so the Parlement had no grounds for a

decision, and the case dragged on for years, the Bishop always paying.

What was there about Saint-Lô to make it so intensely Huguenot? Was it the out-door pulpit at Notre-Dame, I wonder, or the roomy disposition of the nave? Anyhow, so it was that



St. Lô.

this little city set upon a hill became during the wars of religion a lesser Rochelle, a "*véritable boulevard de nos Protestants.*"

Nor was it a bulwark to be despised. Seen from the railway-station (which happens to be the best place from which to gain a first impression), it stands four-square on its lofty rock, rimmed about with walls; and the dark waters of the Vire pass in front of it, to go wandering off among the hills towards the sea. On either side also a tributary stream runs at the bottom of a valley, and the square platform of the old town stands proudly between the three waters, at some places with sloping sides, at others with an abrupt face of naked rock. The western wall, which is the one that faces the station, crowns a precipice that absolutely scowls at the passer-by. Yet here it was, accord-

ing to tradition, through the breach by the side of the ivied, machicolated Tour Beauregard, that the Catholics under Matignon forced an entrance in the memorable siege of 1575. He had already entered the town eight years before, shortly after the ill treatment of Bishop Arthus at Coutances; but that time the garrison had escaped to the woods, and there had been no bloodshed—only a little impartial pillaging by the Breton soldiers, who were not sufficiently educated to distinguish between Catholic and Protestant.

In March, 1574, Colombières (whom we last saw at Coutances) entered Saint-Lô, and was received with enthusiasm, for the city was in imminent danger of a siege. Matignon marched up very soon after; but circumstances compelled him to draw off the bulk of his troops to the siege of Domfront (p. 106), leaving only a small investing force before Saint-Lô. In June, 1575, he returned with the captive Montgommery, and determined to attempt a peaceful entry, like that of 1562. Montgommery was sent forward to interview his old comrade. So the two doughty Huguenots met for the last time, Montgommery at the foot of the wall, Colombières on the ramparts, with his captains and his two young sons. Montgommery then pointed out the uselessness of resistance, and counselled surrender as the best thing that could be done for the common cause. But Colombières replied with bitter taunts:—"Am I indeed speaking to the man who has had the honour to command so many good and true men? You have done meanly yourself, and would now persuade others to do the like. You have preferred the felon's fate to a glorious death for the salvation of your soul and the defence of the Gospel: I at least remember that I am a soldier and a gentleman! Here am I with my sons, and my post will be at the breach; there I shall die, perhaps to-day, perhaps to-morrow, but, please God, the Queen may retard your execution long enough for you to witness my resistance and death!"

On June 10th, at five in the morning, Matignon's artillery

opened a heavy fire. A breach was made by the Tour de la Rose, and then another by the Tour Beauregard; for although the cliff on which the latter tower stands made it difficult of approach, it was thought better to make a double assault. The women of Saint-Lô came to the assistance of the men, rolling down rocks and pouring hot pitch and oil upon the besiegers who made attack after attack with desperate courage; but after

St. Lô from the River.

four hours' fighting there was no gain on either side. The cannon then played again upon the ramparts, and a great piece of wall fell down from Beauregard into the river. In the evening the Catholics brought up their reserves, and gathered for the last attack. They threw themselves upon both the breaches, and a sergeant managed to establish himself with a small body of men at Beauregard, whence he could harass the defenders with a cross-fire. Colombières seemed to be everywhere at once, directing everything, cheering everybody. At last, he stood up on the ramparts with his two boys, who were only twelve and fifteen years old, and thus addressed them: "*Amis!* In giving your lives with my own to God I offer Him all that is dearest in the world to me. But it is better to die with your father undefiled in honour, than to live as the servants of these

degenerate, apostate infidels." Then he called for a cup of wine, and with lifted visor drank it off defiantly before the enemy. As he did so a shot from the sergeant at Beauregard struck him so that he fell dead upon his sons. The Protestants no longer stood out as they had when he was amongst them, and Matignon's men soon forced an entrance;

The Market in the Place des Beaux-Regards.

but the two boys were spared, and lived to carry on the name of their brave sire.

The Place des Beaux-Regards, which lies before the church of Notre-Dame, can be reached directly by a zig-zag road on this western face; but the more usual way is by the Rue Torteron, which goes up on the south side and gives access to the old town by a narrow street between grim houses and the fragment of a gate tower.

The Place des Beaux-Regards is a great rambling open space, which does not even bear one name, for the eastern part of it is called after Gambetta: at one end it forms a terrace over the rock, at the other is the church. No municipal power that lives can reduce it to squareness; and none, we may hope, will ever dare to pull down the islands of houses which diversify, or the irregular streets which approach it. In one of these islands

Maison-Dieu, St.-Lô.

there is a splendid house, the Maison-Dieu, of timber and stone, and resting on a stone base. It has two gables, and the three upper stories project one over the other; every beam of wood is admirably carved, and the corbels bear the pelican, the vernicle, and other symbols. On either side of the Place are streets of the characteristic grey stone houses with square towers, covered with peaky roofs, their square windows often have iron gratings, with sometimes an ogee moulding, grudgingly conceded by way of ornament. Such a street is the Rue des Prés, on the south side of the Place, and the Rue des Images on the north. This last street and the streets that run across it are full of interest. In the Rue des Images is a house with a corner turret, and a very stern, gaunt side to it, and at the end of the street is the gateway—almost a tunnel—that leads down the Rue Porte-Dollée outside the town. The road from here dips down under the northern ramparts of the town, and follows them up again to the Champ de Mars. It is a fine picture; on one hand the long wall, with houses solemnly perched up on the hill behind it, on the other hand the rivulet Dollée running along the valley through another group of old grey houses with slate roofs.

From the Champ de Mars it is easy to reach the north side of Notre-Dame, where the charming out-door pulpit projects over the narrow pavement; its panels are of large flamboyant tracery, and a high canopy protects the preacher.

As you walk towards the west end you will notice that the church becomes narrower, so that there is room for a slim house to slip in between it and the street. The same thing occurs on the south side, and this is the secret of the church's peculiarity. It is in fact, pear-shaped.

Nothing could be more curious than the effect as we go in by the west door. We stand between two enormous piers, one carved into a cluster of shafts, the other in part plain, in part decorated with a sort of panelling. These piers have a narrow narthex between them (for no attempt was made to include the

tower spaces), and from here the church broadens out to its great round east end. It is, as I said, like a pear. The pillars of the nave (which are without impost or capital) are spread out beyond those of the narthex, and the aisle walls slope away so as further to broaden the church towards the east. To add to the strange effect the chancel arch (which is all on one side) has been cut away in its lower part to make the east end the more open; and the north aisle, not content with merely

Notre-Dame, St. Lô.

sloping out, develops a great bulge, which forms a chapel where the transept might be in a normal church. Pillars separate this chapel from the ambulatory, and on the north side there is a continuous range of pillars forming a double aisle. There is no triforium anywhere, and only some plain upper windows in the choir; but the large windows of the aisles give plenty of light.

Perhaps it was this defiance of tradition in their church that inclined the people of Saint-Lô to break with tradition in their theology. Who knows? Certainly the amplitude of the building was admirably adapted to the *prêche*. But I do not

Inside the Church, St. Lô.

see why the authors of this church should be blamed for deserting the cruciform plan. They succeeded in producing an original building, and what is so precious as a sane originality? I own that I like the interior of Saint-Lô immensely. The bulge on the south has the practical result of providing a chapel in such a position that a large congregation can assist at the service; and this attainment of a dignified interior by means of breadth and openness might be studied with advantage by those whose business it is to build churches to suit our modern requirements.

There is some good glass, but most of it is either fragmentary or restored: one window, that with the circles of cherubim, is in good condition; and, further singularity about this church,

there are in the north ambulatory two quite respectable modern windows, respectable at least in that they are fair copies, and not vile parodies of the old.

How different are the substantial spires of Saint-Lô to those of Coutances! They may well be, for they belong to the seventeenth century; hence the curious drums which form their bases, hence the *echinus* moulding that peeps out on the northern end. The towers below them are very different the one from the other; that on the north is Decorated, that on the south Flamboyant. The west front is as curious as anything else in this church: three flat porches under a straight parapet, then three Decorated windows under a plain strip of stone; the middle porch is not under the middle window, there are undecided patches above, and the carving about the porches is eloquent of Huguenot zeal.

Château at Esquay.

CHAPTER VIII

BAYEUX, CREULLY, FONTAINE-HENRY, THAON, LASSON.

Every Anglo-Saxon has heard of the Bayeux tapestry, and so every Anglo-Saxon comes to Bayeux, although for that matter he can see the famous needle-work in accurate facsimile at the South Kensington Museum. A little train of our brothers and cousins hurriedly works round the glazed screens in the Museum, anxious travellers flit once or twice across the cathedral, strangers with homely faces appear at the *table d'hôte*. But they never appear again. Saint-Lô calls them, and Coutances calls, and the distant voice of St. Michael bids them hasten to his shrine. They are gone, whirled away by the unquiet spirit of the age, which will not let them rest and consider, even on their holidays. It is a matter of conscience with them to be able to say at home that they have seen such and such places: and yet, were conscience more severe, it would not allow them to say that they have seen anything. For he who sees too much sees in truth nothing, and he who takes his holiday too seriously will have no memories but those of his meals and his misfortunes; as who should say, At Dieppe we tasted *sole Normande*, at Caen the cider disagreed with us, at Lisieux we lost the train because it was in time.

Such thoughts fill me with sadness ; and therefore I cannot help crying now and then a *siste viator*, although I know it is to battle vainly against a nervous age. Why should one hurry away from Bayeux? Caen retains all visitors for a night or two because its many monuments exhaust the tripper ; but Bayeux is less importunate, and so the savour of its quiet streets is missed. Yet it has a hotel, the Luxembourg, where there is a garden full of pear-trees, asters, heliotrope and roses, and also a view of the cathedral, both rare things, I admit, to us who have become used to the unromantic haunts of the commercial traveller. For those who prefer the sea to the gentle country hereabouts there are quiet watering places like Port-en-Bessin and Arromanches within half a dozen miles, so that a cyclist can leave his children there, if he have any, and scour the country round. The Bessin is worth the trouble, being full of interest. We have already passed, in coming from Saint-Lô, Balleroy, perfect example of a Louis XIII. *château*, and, just in the outskirts of Bayeux, the lovely little Norman tower of St. Loup-Hors with its quaint figure of St. Loup standing on an indistinct dragon over the door. We shall take in, too, as many places as we can on the way from Bayeux to Caen ; but even then how much we shall miss!—the remains of a *château* at Brécy, the important churches of Norrey and Bernières, and a crowd of others, a Roman camp near Banville, a still flourishing pilgrimage centre at Douvres-la-Déliverande, and the field of Formigny, where the English fought and lost the last pitched battle of the Hundred Years War, and the long-bow that had worsted the knight at the beginning of that protracted warfare went down finally before the cannon at its close.

There is a special charm about Bayeux. It is not a stronghold upon a hill, like all the towns we have lately seen, but just a quiet old cathedral city, a centre of rural industry indeed, exporting much butter, but without any quickening of the pulse. It is homelier than most French towns, and has more gardens

and trees; it has the air of being entirely old, and at every turn one is struck by the pleasant run of its streets, their pretty corners, their old world recesses and courtyards.

Near the west front of the cathedral a slim stone cylinder with a sort of perforated nightcap sticks out among some houses, which unfortunately hide much of its length. It is called the Lanterne des Morts, though really nothing more portentous than a medieval chimney: but such chimneys are rare. The Rue Maîtrise contains (No. 13) one of the oldest houses in Bayeux; it is in stone, with one trefoil-headed window, and probably belongs to the thirteenth century. In the Rue Bourbesneur is the Maison du Gouverneur, which is a simultaneous mixture of Flamboyant and Renaissance work: its windows are good, but it is especially remarkable for its bold stair-turret, a hexagonal structure fitted with a square top story. On the east side of the cathedral is No. 47 Rue Larcher, a delicate *hôtel* of the Louis XIV. period. On the north of the cathedral is the Palais de Justice and Hôtel de Ville, once the bishop's palace, a pleasant jumble of Norman, Gothic and classical buildings, with a magnificent plane-tree in the courtyard by the cathedral.

Again, opposite the cathedral (on its west side) is No. 6, Rue Bienvenue, which dates from the fifteenth to the sixteenth century, and has carved figures of the Angel, Adam, the Serpent, Eve; and below a mermaid and a unicorn.

Best known to visitors is the fourteenth century house at the corner of the Rues des Cuisiniers and St. Martin, a splendid half-timber building, projecting over the two streets on a stone base. It must have been fresh and new in the days when Alain Chartrier (the poet whose eloquent lips were kissed as he lay asleep by Queen Margaret of Scotland) first paced these streets. What scenes it must have witnessed since! No. 4, in Rue St. Malo, which continues the Rue St. Martin, is a later house of the same type, less striking in its general plan, but remarkable for the beautiful figures of saints that are carved on it.

At the corner of Rue St. Martin

Perhaps the children still sing the old rhyme with which they used to invoke the guardian saint of their home: —

"Saint Pierre, Saint Simon,
Gardez bien notre maison!
S'il y vient un pauvre,
Baillez-li l'aumône:

"S'il y vient un pélerin,
Baillez-li de notre vin ;
Mais s'il y vient un larron,
Baillez-li du lourd bâton !"

To architects the chapel of the Seminary (a little way to the east of the cathedral) is of peculiar interest as being a work of pure Early English style, even to the moulded windows, set down in the middle of Normandy. It was built between 1206 and 1231, no doubt by some English architect. The east end is curiously divided by the vaulting into two bays, and there used to be an altar in each.

The history of the cathedral is like a medieval picture of Purgatory. The oldest part was probably built not later than the first half of the eleventh century, and to this the crypt may perhaps belong. It was burnt down, and in 1077, William the Conqueror assisted at the dedication of a second Romanesque church, which had been built by the famous Bishop Odo, his brother ; but his son, Henry I., burnt that down thirty years later during his fight with Robert of Belesme. In 1107 it was rebuilt, and in 1159 reburnt. From these disasters there have survived the pier arches of the nave, the bulk of the western towers with their chapels, and the walls of the central tower. The rest of the church, its choir and chapels and the high coupled lancets which form the clerestory of the nave, were built in the newly invented Gothic style between 1165 and 1231. And the architects were content to adapt the west front to their ideas by just clapping five porches on to it, and filling them with carving. It was left to the purists of 1761 to shave off the tabernacle work of the central porch, and reduce it to what they thought elegance. The tower was finished in 1478, owing to the generosity of Bishop Louis d'Harcourt, who proposed to the chapter that he should defray the cost, whereat the canons replied by promising to remember him continually at the chapter mass. The tower was finished ; it was capped with a gorgeous affair of gilded lead, on which stood St.

Michael, his sword flaming over the flamboyant pinnacles and finials. But the fire demon had not yet done with Bayeux; and in 1676 Michael melted into a tower that had become flamboyant in a material sense. Early in the next century the upper part of the tower was rebuilt in the classical style of the period. It was a decent piece of work, but modern restorers thought fit to destroy it. Thus, while the first stage of flamboyant windows belongs to 1478, the second stage and the incongruous copper cupola and spire which surmount it date from 1860.

The church is built on sloping ground, to which accident it owes some of its character, the height of its eastern walls on the outside, and the steps by which one descends into the nave; by a very happy arrangement the choir (standing over the ancient crypt) is maintained on the same level as the nave, and the level is preserved at the crossing, while the transepts and ambulatory are on the lower ground.

This is one of the church's points. Another is the remarkable pier arches. These are most splendid florid Norman work, an epitome of the many forms of ornament used in the twelfth century. The spandrels are filled with diapering, of which there are nine different kinds, the prettiest being the curved overlapping rope work in the eastern part. The decoration of the arches is as varied; there are zig-zags and lozenges, billets and beakheads, frets, and a sort of shell ornament on many of the mouldings. There is a strange eclecticism about this sculpture, as if the masons knew by inspiration what we know by museums; for instance, in the first bay on the left hand, the twin caps are Corinthian in character, although many of the other caps are distinctly Gothic, the figure in the little niche looks for all the world like a Hindoo god, the diaper above is suggestive of a modern "Japanesy" wall-paper; some of the interlaced work is almost Celtic; some of the beak-heads look like Assyrian monsters; the dragons are exceedingly Chinese—indeed, such dashing dragons can never have been

seen before or since outside the Celestial Empire. These fiery beasts are in some of the small niches, in others are saints in stiff Norman chasubles; in one of those of the restored eastern bay some ingenious modern has carved a copy of Harold's oath from the famous tapestry, which was perhaps the best thing that could be done under the circumstances.

The choir, a most beautiful example of Early French, has flat panels pierced through with plate-tracery, which is very conspicuous by reason of its black shade. Apart from the apse, its triforium presents the unusual arrangement of four arches enclosed in one. Some one during the classical ascendency fluted the pillars of the apse, so as to make them, I suppose, a little less barbaric to his eyes; the result is to provide an interesting contrast between the concave surface thus obtained and the convexities of the clustered piers around; it gives one also an opportunity of realising how much more Romanesque traditions lingered in Early French than in Early English art—in the distance one might think that piers and capitals as well had been made in the seventeenth century. Medallions containing the heads of early bishops of Bayeux form the decoration of the choir vault, and very effective they are in their well placed simplicity. They seem to have been more accurately restored than the other frescoes in this church; those on the south transept, for instance, betray a very free treatment by the mistakes imported into their costume, while that of the martyrdom of Becket is glaringly and altogether modern. Still the picture of the Visitation in the third chapel of the south ambulatory remains a pretty example of sixteenth century art; and in the next chapel one can trace a good deal of the earlier paintings of scenes from St. Eloi's life, though the large figure of the saint himself is again unblushingly modern. The only old glass, by the way, is that in the east and west windows of choir and nave.

The short transepts afford an excellent example of the

The Cathedral, Bayeux.

freedom with which medieval architects worked. The walls are both covered with ornament; but while the north transept has regular arcades of much stateliness, the south seems to have been left to the individual fancy of some whimsical mason. He has carved with much skill fine bosses of foliage;

but he has chosen to arrange his spandrels in quite different figures, and while he has filled one with feathering of some regularity, he has treated the other as if he had been amusing himself with a pencil and a pair of compasses. On the outside of the transept this restless genius has made his spandrels over the Becket porch look for all the world like a watchmaker's tray.

The same tendency to cover every stone surface with figures, raised or sunken, is very noticeable on the outside of the church as far as the transepts; but beyond them the chevet sweeps round in a simple pointed arcade under lancets. The porch in the south transept, which I mentioned a few lines back, contains sculpture representing the life of St. Thomas à Becket; for it was only a few miles from Bayeux that Henry II. let fall the famous exclamation, "Of the cowards who eat my bread, is there none that will rid me of this troublesome priest?" This porch used to be walled up, and it was only opened to admit a high dignitary of the cathedral at his first entrance, and at his last when his coffin was carried in for burial. There is, alas! up against the church, a mason's yard, which seems to be a regular appendage nowadays, a sort of modern cloister, to those buildings which are controlled by the State as *Monuments Historiques*. Historic they will soon cease to be, if the present mania for replacing every worn stone continues. Some of the tracery of the north chapels is certainly not of the old Decorated design; and though I suppose restorers are latterly more careful, the fact remains that at the present rate of restoration Bayeux cathedral will in another fifty years have ceased to be. As it is, the chapter house has the appearance of an entirely new building.

Perhaps the Norman towers will have the most chance of surviving. No words are needed here to praise their massive stateliness. Later builders learnt to raise towers without so great a weight of stone, without such mass of spreading buttresses; and yet what they gained in grace they lost in grandeur. The north spire is Early French: that on the south tower was built, it seems, in 1424. In a row of niches over

the western doors, ten great statues of the ten sainted bishops of Bayeux look down upon a sinful world.

The sacristan does not jump down one's throat at Bayeux, but he should certainly be sought out for a visit to the crypt, the sacristy or *Trésor*, and the chapter-house. In the chapter-house there is a labyrinth arranged in the tiles (which are excellent specimens, by the way), and such labyrinths are now extremely rare. I suppose their use was to afford a little sober amusement to the canons when chapter meetings became prosy.

The *Trésor* contains a few objects which are really worth seeing. The most famous is an Arab coffer of ivory and silver gilt. There were four others like it till the Calvinists protested in their practical way, when this one only was saved by the bishop of the day, who carried it off into hiding. Their importation is popularly attributed to St. Louis, but all we can safely say is that they were perhaps brought over during one of the Crusades. Even more interesting is the enormous oak cupboard, which is one of the finest thirteenth century pieces extant: some traces remain of the paintings which once covered it. But other smaller cupboards of more recent date, especially one with a multitude of small doors, should not pass unnoticed. There are also, a fine iron folding chair of the fourteenth century, and a chasuble with its narrow stole, attributed to St. Regnobert,—it is not so old as all that, but its orphreys seem to be really very ancient Byzantine work, and the silk, though perhaps later in date, belongs probably to an early medieval period. The processional dragon, which was carried at certain solemnities, is also preserved here.

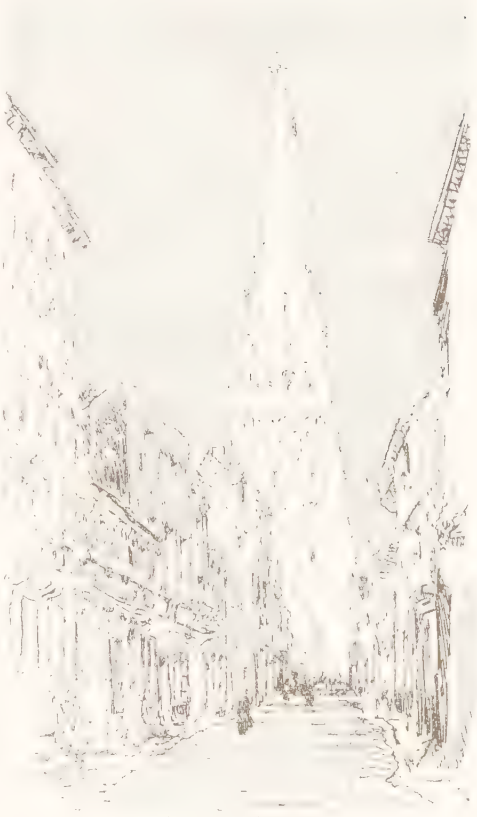
The crypt was filled up and forgotten for ages. It was discovered in 1412, when the grave of Bishop Jean de Boissey was being dug, as an inscription over the window tells us:—

"Alors en foissant la place
Devant le grand autel de grâce
Trova la basse chapelle
Dont il n'avait été nouvelle
Où il est mis en sépulture.
Dieu veuille avoir son âme en cure."

One can peep into it from some openings in the ambulatory, but it is worth going right in to see the strangely carved capitals of this very early work: one or two of the bases are of full Norman character, but most are of a more inchoate type. The date of the crypt is not however certain: while some have ventured to ascribe a Merovingian origin, others have classed it as Odo's work which was a-building when Harold visited Bayeux, and was dedicated in the presence of the Conqueror in 1077. Incredible as it seems, two of the caps have been replaced by modern imitations: even the darkness could not save them. There is a recumbent effigy of a bishop in the crypt, which retains a good deal of colouring, and has well designed orphreys, while the almuce lies under the figure.

Has any traveller passed through Bayeux without going to see the *Tapisserie de la Reine Mathilde*? Hardly, I should think, of late years, since it has been known and accessible in the Musée. But for ages it was unknown outside of Bayeux. The first mention is in an inventory of the year 1476: it was used then and down to the Revolution to decorate the nave of the cathedral on great festivals, and was carefully kept in a press in one of the chapels. In 1724 a drawing was made of it, and an eminent antiquary, named Lancelot, lighting on the drawing, read a learned paper on it: but he did not know anything about the tapestry itself, and conjectured that the drawing represented some sculpture or painted glass at Caen. A little later a shrewd monk, Montfaucon by name, made determined efforts to trace the origin of the drawing: he wrote to Caen, but was told that nothing was known there about it (the amazing provincialism of these provincials!), then he wrote to Bayeux and was told about the tapestry. Whereupon he introduced it into a great book he was writing on the monuments of French monarchy; and the treasure began to be famous. Yet in 1792, when the people of Bayeux raised a battalion for the war, they could think of no better material to cover one of their military waggons withal than this priceless

tapestry. An official named Le Forestier, who certainly deserves a statue, rushed off to buy more ordinary canvas, and rescued the tapestry, carrying it off to his study to await quieter times. It only drifted gradually into security. In the earlier years of the nineteenth century, it was shown to visitors by being rolled from one cylinder to another across a table; and the embroidery, which had lasted for more than seven centuries under the care of the Church, began to show signs of rapid wear. At last it was framed and glazed as we see it now. It is conveniently arranged, and each scene is supplied with a title; but if you wish to give it a real study you should bring with you Mr. F. Rede Fowke's "Bayeux Tapestry" (Bell and Sons, 10*s.* 6*d.*), an admirable book, which is enriched with a complete series of reproductions. The historical interest of



A Street in Bayeux.

the quaint and spirited needlework is of course immense; but in spite of much obvious strangeness and angularity, no one can help admiring its very real artistic qualities, the power of telling a story, the action and characterisation of its scenes, and the fancy of its grotesque borders. Needless to say, the *Tapisserie de la Reine Mathilde* is not a tapestry, and is not by Queen Matilda. However, it is contemporaneous work, Mr. Fowke considers, executed by order of Bishop Odo, expressly for the decoration of the cathedral, the nave of which it fits exactly. The local form of the name *Wilgelm*, and the local shape of the wine-barrels, make it highly probable that the work was done in Bayeux. It is not a tapestry, but a piece of embroidery. A seamless band of linen (now the colour of brown holland with age), 230 feet long and only some 20 inches wide, is worked with a needle in worsteds of eight colours—dark and light blue, dark and light green, red, yellow, dove-colour, and black. There is no shading and no perspective; the colour is arbitrary, but an attempt is made to indicate distance by means of different colouring,—the off legs, for instance, of a green horse will be red. There are seventy-two scenes, containing 623 human figures, 202 horses and mules, 55 dogs, and 505 other animals. Not only are there sea and battle pictures (ending with the Battle of Hastings), but we see eleventh-century cookery in one compartment, Mont-St.-Michel and its quicksands in another, and of course in others the principal actors in that great drama—Edward the Confessor, Harold, William, and the warlike Bishop Odo.

However much you are determined to hurry, at least you should not go by the high road from Bayeux to Caen. Often these unbending enormities can be avoided by picking out a different route on the map in order to see the country as it really is. That I must generally leave you to do according to your energy and inclination; but we are now on special ground—

"Si tu veux être heureux,
Vas entre Caen et Bayeux."

says a Norman proverb. This land is a farmer's paradise, and if we pick our way we shall not only pass through some country that is like a pleasant dream, but we shall see four charming places that the ordinary tourist misses. Of course much will still have to be missed, but we shall at least see one castle, two *châteaux*, and two Norman churches, all of quite special interest and beauty, and we shall pass by old farms and manors and hamlets and churches too numerous to be recounted, in the twenty-four miles which will bring us to Caen.

Therefore, leaving Bayeux by the Octroi de Caen, we will avoid the main fork of the road, and take that on the left which leads to Esquay-sur-Seulles, a pretty village with a pretty *château* ; from here the excellent French system of sign-posts will guide us through all our cross roads without fail. Our route will lie through St. Gabriel, which has the remains of a Norman priory, Creully, Fontaine-Henri, Thaon, Lasson, too, if we like, and then by the Creully road into Caen.

Each of these villages has had the good sense to keep still, and the ravages of the nineteenth century have passed them by. Ah no! There is one exception at Creully. It entered into the heart of man to restore the outside of Creully church. Now, enough of the old corbels remain to show their rich barbaric humour ; the Norman masons, in fact, cracked a series of jokes all round the top of their church. But the lower corbels have been thrown on to the dustheap, and what I have no doubt are very careful imitations have been put in their place. If you want to have the whole meaning of restoration in a nutshell, just compare the merry life of the old heads with the glum contortions of the new.

Inside, the church cannot but strike you as remarkable by reason of the flat, low effect of its heavily ribbed vault. This vault belongs, like the rest of the church, to the end of the twelfth century, and it is an early example of the vaulting of a nave. The effect of this long nave (only the last bay is Early French) and its tunnel-like aisles is admirable. The church

is also exceedingly rich in capitals; some have a linen pattern, some volutes, some heads with queer moustaches, some have interlaced work, and for this one may be specially signalled under the vault in the south side of the third bay.

The barons of Creully were mighty men of valour far back in the dim ages of Norman history. At the battle of Val-ès-Dunes, when William the Bastard and Henry of France defeated the rebel barons, it was Hamon le Hardi, the first baron and a descendant, it was said, of Rollo himself, who knocked the French king off his horse, whence the saying:—

"De Costentin jessit la lance
Ki abattit le Roi de France."

This Hamon (sometimes called Haimon-az-Dentz, or le Dentu) seems to have died of his feat. No doubt Robert Fitz-Hamon, his not less famous son, was among those who rallied to William the Conqueror's battle-cry when he—

"Venir fit cels du Bessin
E li barons de Costentin,"

as the Roman de Rou tells us. His services must have been great; for he was rewarded with the *comtés, honneurs et seigneuries* of Gloucester and Bristol. In the troubles that followed among the great Duke's sons—

"Robert ki fut fitz Haimon
Avec altres riches Barons,"

took the part of Henry I. against his own feudal lord and namesake, Robert Curthose, and it was he who helped Henry to subdue the country by the rough and bloody methods of the time. At the siege of Falaise, Robert got an arrow in his head, and died mad a few months afterwards, leaving as his heiress Mabile, his daughter.

This lady was too good a match to be let go, and King Henry pressed her to marry his natural son Robert. But Mabile, who was high spirited as she was rich, refused. The King asked her the reason.

"Sire," she answered, "it is clear that your choice is fixed on

me rather for my heritage than myself. But with such a portion as mine, it would be a shame for me to marry a lord who had not two names. Sire Robert Fitz-Hamon was the name of my father, and not only his own name but that of his family. So, Sire, for the love of God, let me not have for husband a man with only one name."

The King replied, "Damozel, thou speakest well. Sir Robert Fitz-Hamon was the name of thy father; thy husband's name shall be as fine, for I will dub him Sir Robert Fitz-Roy."

"That is a fine name," retorted Mabile, "and will give him great renown all his life, but what will be the name of his son?"

Then the King was convinced of the girl's reasonableness, and promised her that Robert should have a fine name without stain, for him and his heirs; and, since Gloucester was the chief estate of her heritage, he would call him from that day, Robert, Earl of Gloucester.

Mabile then consented to the match: "That, Sire, suits me very well. On these terms I agree to all, and all my goods are his."

In the Hundred Years War the Castle of Creully, after being dismantled in one siege, was much strengthened, and the machicolated tower on the wall was built. Here the peasants were safe, for they could fly to the protection of its walls in times of danger. In 1391, the barony of Creully was again vested in an heiress; through her marriage with the Sire de Vierville, it passed to that family, who left an unpleasant and perhaps undeserved record for cruelty. The inhabitants of these parts still weave stories round the old castle, in which every subterranean passage becomes an *oubliette*. A harmless skeleton was found in one of these passages some seventy years ago, and at once everybody was certain that a young peasant girl, the victim of some baron, had been chained here with an iron ring about the foot. By now the story must have reached the proportions of a three-volume novel.

In 1512, Marie de Vierville, having been twice a widow, was

married a third time (for she was an heiress) to Jean de Sillans. Thus once more the family name of the de Creully was changed. The first Antoine de Sillans, who died in 1570,

Creully.

seems to have been an estimable person, to judge by his long epitaph. He was a staunch Catholic in those troublous times, and had fifteen children :—

> " De quinze enfants qu'il eut il en a vu les quatre
> Pour la foi catholique et pour le Roi combattre."

There were no less than five Antoines, of whom the first three stood high in the royal favour. The tomb in the church with black marble ornaments is that of Antoine III. ; it was set up by his wife, Sylvie de Rohan, and the original inscription

after describing his many virtues, gave the best testimony of all by declaring that his wife—

> "Dans ce tombeau résolut de montrer
> Que le trépas ne l'en peut séparer."

But the last two Antoines ended in bankruptcy, and in 1682 the castle passed into the hands of Colbert, the famous minister of Louis XIV. In 1750, a niece of the third Colbert, the Duchesse de Montmorency-Luxemburg, inherited it, and held it till the Revolution put an end to all old things.

And of their castle, Creully castle, what are we to say? It is just the prettiest castle in Normandy,—not the greatest or the grandest, but the prettiest. First, a wall along the road, then a burst of verdure between it and a great wall high above us, as we stand where the stream runs under the arches of a quaint, formal mill. Within the wall is a square tower, with overhanging top story; beyond it, windows peep out, and, further on, a tall chimney sprouts up from an oblong base; there is a second tower with irregular sides, within which the cap of the stair-turret seems to stand on guard. And the whole is set about with a profusion of ivy, and black-berried elder, and spinning poplar leaves, and Turneresque trees, which seem to have grown up on purpose to do honour to the place.

It is not a ruin. Up on the south side a roadway takes us by the outer court and over the moat to a fragment of Norman gateway, where we can enter, after pulling a bell, between the hours of 9 and 11, 1 and 5.30. This side is all comfortable and sixteenth-century, rather like some of our own Tudor country houses, from the ornamental battlements to the gay flower-beds of the cosy garden.

There is an inn at Creully, and one might well stay there and explore the country round about. But we will follow the Caen road from Creully for just over three *kilomètres*, till a signpost points us to Fontaine-Henry. It is only a dotted road in the ordnance map, but it is quite good all the same. Joanne, by the way, gives an even more minute map for the strip of coun-

A bit of Creully Castle.

try between Port-en-Bessin and Cabourg. To reach the *château* of Fontaine-Henri we go straight through the most curious and delightful straggling village, which, thanks to the abundance of stone in the neighbourhood of Caen, is pretty much the same now as it was before the Revolution.

The *château* of Fontaine-Henry is one of the very best examples of a French country-house: it was built between the age of strength and the age of stiffness. Creully is a feudal castle: Balleroy, splendid, imposing though it be, is formal, a creature of absolute symmetry. Now Balleroy was built in 1636, but Fontaine-Henri was finished just a century

earlier: nothing could be freer, more original; and surely there never was such a piece of triumphant audacity as its enormous roof and chimney, kept, as they are, well in tone by the charming corner turret below, and the spired projection at the other side.

The roof is actually several feet higher than the house—a unique arrangement. This left wing is of the same date (c. 1536), and seems to be by the same artist as the Hôtel d'Escoville, in Caen. The right wing is a generation earlier.

The road by the *château* leads straight through Thaon back to the Caen road: but to see what Thaon contains we must turn off to the left along the village street, a long street full of character, where we are not in the least surprised to see a gentleman in a full-bottomed wig on one of the houses,—he is in stone, but he would feel quite at home if he were back in flesh and blood. It is necessary to ask one's way to the *vieille église*, which stands by a lane and a clear rivulet outside the village, deserted among the weeds, with only an ancient yew-tree and one or two tombs to bear it company. It is a quite exceptional church, full Norman, but in its own way: the most divergent conjectures have been made as to its date, but all agree that it is one of the most interesting Romanesque churches in Normandy. Its walls are covered from end to end with perfectly plain round arcades, only enriched with shafts on the south of the choir, with zig-zags on the north, and decorated with a chequered surface on the north of the nave. This most telling scheme of decoration reminds one just a little of the Saxon church at Bradford-on-Avon, though in fact it may not be earlier than the twelfth century. Somebody, I suppose to adapt it as a barn, cut off the aisles, and filled in the nave arches, respecting, however, the caps, which are very rich.

We soon reach the Caen road again just above Cairon. But, if we are to see Lasson, we must turn off to the right at the farther side of Cairon, and then come back to the road again, which is about a mile there and back. Lasson *château* was probably

designed by Sohier, the architect of St. Pierre at Caen; it certainly belongs to the François I. period, and is considered a *chef d'œuvre*. But I think it is possible to overrate it: the detail is better than the general design, which is patchworky without being very original. It contains a quaint kitchen, and a cellar that is like a scene in a play. On the frieze of its *façade* is one

Fontaine-Henri.

of those strange enigmatic mottoes of the Renaissance, SPERO LACON BI ASSES PERLEN. One antiquary has interpreted this—*Spero* (Latin) "I hope," *Lacon* "that Lasson," *Bi* or *Be* (English) "is," *Asses* (French) "enough," *Perlen* (German) "pearls," *i.e.* "I hope that Lasson is fine enough." An even more ingenious writer sees English in another of the words, and reads—"I hope that asses will keep away from Lasson"!

La Ville aux Clochers.

CHAPTER IX

CAEN

It is almost strange, after so much wooded country, to be amongst the broad brown fields that sweep down towards Caen. We could not approach it from a better point than the Creully road. As it comes into view we are struck by a certain resemblance to Oxford,—and indeed the sailors long ago used to call it "*la ville aux clochers*," just as Oxford is the city of spires. Moreover it had also a famous university, and another name for it was "*la ville de sapience*." After we have left in the fields on our right the remains of the Abbey of Ardennes, which are now farm buildings, the city lies before us like a map: on the right are the twin spires of the Abbaye aux Hommes, in the middle the famous spire of St. Pierre, and on the left the towers (which also had spires before the Hundred Years War) of the Abbaye aux Dames.

We may have time before darkness sets in to pay our first visit to the Abbaye aux Hommes, the church which the Conqueror built in honour of St. Stephen. English travellers instinctively go to Caen, remembering how once it was ruled by the same king that ruled in London. It is true that all the rest of Normandy was also part of the English realm, but the

monuments of that unimaginable fact do not come home to one so strongly elsewhere. For Caen is specially the town of William the Conqueror, his favourite dwelling place, the centre of the new kingdom which he created, and his last home; and it is Caen that was chosen for those two characteristic monuments of William's might, commenced in the very year of the Conquest, the Abbaye aux Hommes and the Abbaye aux Dames.

The Conqueror built no less than twenty-three convents, but these two were wrung from him by the force of circumstances. He had in 1053, married Matilda, daughter of the Count of Flanders; but the pair had a grandfather in common, and so Mauger, the Archbishop of Rouen (who by the way also had a share in the unfortunate grandfather), excommunicated them for marrying within the forbidden limits. The fulminations of the Church only stiffened William's back, and for six years he defied them, deposing Mauger from his Archbishopric and punishing every opponent whom he could reach. Among his victims was Lanfranc, then Prior of Bec, who was ordered to quit his monastery. An old monkish writer describes the prior, mounted on a lame horse, the best that the humble convent could give, riding slowly away from the convent whose prosperity seemed about to disappear with him. The brothers accompanied him to the confines of their lands, and with tears bade him farewell. As luck would have it, he had not journeyed far from his much loved home before he met William. The Duke received him with anger in his eyes and a threat on his lips; but Lanfranc, who after all was an Italian, went up to him with polite assurance, and insisted on his listening to what he had to say. He began the conversation with a jest,—"I am obeying your command as quickly as I can, and I will obey it better if you will give me a better horse." William was pleased at once by his spirit. In the course of an hour Lanfranc succeeded in persuading the stark outlaw of the Church that it was useless to run his head against the walls of

Rome. William saw that Lanfranc was no ordinary man, and on the spot he charged him with a mission of reconciliation to Rome. The result was as might be expected: Lanfranc had no difficulty in making the Pope see that William was not the sort of man to give up his wife, or anything else that was his; and that therefore it was useless to perpetuate miseries among the Norman people on account of their ruler's sin. It would be wiser, and more to the glory of holy Church, if the Duke and Duchess were granted a dispensation for that which after all could not be undone, on condition that they should make some conspicuous demonstration of their piety, and render a permanent service to the Church whose laws had been broken.

Lanfranc returned with this triumphant result of his diplomacy. The excommunication was raised, on condition that the Duke and Duchess should build two abbeys, one for men and one for women. William accepted the arrangement with enthusiasm, and built the abbeys on the grandest scale, spending immense sums of money, and presiding in person over the works. Lanfranc he installed as abbot of the men's convent, which was dedicated to St. Stephen. It was with regret that Lanfranc consented to leave his old home on the Risle to preside over the new foundation; but before the church was ready to be consecrated, he had passed to greater and remoter honours,—the Duke had become a King, and he, the new King's most trusted adviser, was in 1070 made Archbishop of Canterbury. In 1077 the church of St. Etienne was dedicated with great pomp in the presence of the King, Queen, and Archbishop, whose fortunes had been so closely bound up with it.

The burial of the Conqueror at St. Etienne is one of those lurid scenes which bring history at times so close to drama. The fierce old man had died at Rouen, and his death had cast all those around him into a ferment of insecurity: the strong hand was rigid in death, and each must now look after his own. So all fled, and when the archbishop and his clergy came to

the house, they found that the servants had stolen everything in it and left the body without a single watcher. The churchmen, fulfilling William's last wish, brought the body to Caen, carrying it by water down the stately reaches of the Seine.

At the gates of Caen, Abbot Gislebert and all his monks advanced to meet the body of their founder. The coffin was carried through the narrow streets of the town; monks and clergy and people followed with chanting and tears, the devotion of vassals atoning thus for the desertion of friends. It must have been a strange sight on this summer morning: the procession winding its way among the little wooden houses that lay between the Conqueror's great white stone churches; the uplifted cross, the trailing incense; the monks in the black habit of St. Benedict, walking two and two with downcast eyes as they chanted the plaintive verses; the long line of clergy in their flowing vestments; the imposing company of mitred bishops, and the abbots who all but equalled them in dignity. Here walks Gislebert, the fat, jocund, hunting abbot, and there, with keen eye, and the glamour of sanctity already marked upon the firm, sweet lips, Anselm, the Abbot of Bec, who has come hither from a bed of sickness. And the people point to him, feeling his greatness then as we do now, and whisper how *he*, the dread King, had wished to make his last confession to Abbot Anselm, but that Heaven had punished him, making Anselm to fall ill so that he came not to shrive him. And thus silently under its long pall goes the awful solitary burden, which even now they watch far more in fear than in love, marvelling to think that he who a few days ago held their lives in the hollow of his hand is now that impotent and heavy load to be laid away out of sight.

In the midst of this solemn pomp there arose a cry of terror. Flames burst from a house by which the procession was passing; it was unsafe to proceed, and the whole quarter was threatened with destruction. The people rushed away in all directions.

Once more the body of the unloved duke was deserted. Only the monks followed it into the convent.

But for the burial all the people gathered together again, to witness the last solemnity. In the midst of the choir, now thronged by bishops and abbots, was the heaped earth of an open grave ; just without the choir the candles flickered round the corpse. The nave was filled with people. When the Mass was over, the eloquent Bishop of Evreux went into the pulpit to pronounce a funeral discourse ; but as he finished his last words a strange voice rang through the church, and all turned to discover the audacious speaker. It was Ascelin, a rich burgher of Caen, a man not easily to be silenced, and surrounded moreover by sympathetic friends. He stood up, a representative of the city against the castle, one of the first protagonists of a long and bitter war, and protested on behalf of right against one who had made such an appalling use of might.

"That earth which you disturb is the site of my father's house ! That man for whom you pray took it from him by force, and, without heeding his just claims, built thereon this church. Therefore I do reclaim this ground, in the name of God. I forbid you to cover the body of the robber with my soil, or to bury it in my heritage !"

The bishops crowded round Ascelin, paid him sixty sous on the spot for the grave, and promised to make all the rest good to him. So he disappears from history, his half-crown in his pocket, and the smile of prosaic triumph on his face—sturdy, broad-footed burgher, type of the yet remote future when the castle shall have crumbled away before the city, and power shall lie with him who best understands the mysteries of finance !

The last scene of that funeral can hardly be described. The coffin was not large enough or strong enough ; and all the strength of incense smoke could not prevent the congregation from hurrying out of the church, and leaving the terror-struck

monks to finish the service as best they could, and then retire "all trembling to their cells."

Many centuries afterwards the Calvinistic mob broke into the tomb and took out the bones of the great King. They were, with the exception of a thigh-bone, given to a monk, but were lost when the abbey a little later was sacked. The thigh-bone, which had passed into private hands, was brought back, and is now all that remains of William the Conqueror.

The Protestants not only emptied the Conqueror's tomb, broke the stained glass, and made away with the abbey's famous reliquary, but their ravages reduced the choir to such dilapidation that the Norman Parlement ordered its demolition. Then a monk, Jean de Baillehache, who deserves canonisation by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, arose and set about patiently to save the church. He worked so well that, "with the assistance of God and the saints who are honoured in this church," he secured its preservation. Afterwards he became prior, and lived through the first half of the next century, dying in 1644. The recent restorers of the Chapel of the True Cross buried his tombstone two feet beneath the earth. Was this because they could not bear to face it?

The church of St. Etienne, where these things happened, needs but little description: its stern and solemn grandeur must impress the most careless visitor, especially if, as I have suggested, it is first seen when the setting sun lights up the west front that is so great in its utter simplicity. At such a time it is all vastness and silence within; and in the darkness one is able to feel the character of a place that relies upon mass, not upon detail. But it is a mistake to think that what we see is the Conqueror's work, appropriate though it may seem to him. Very little of the original wide-jointed masonry can be seen. The present west front was built up against the original one in 1090, when the lower part of the towers was made, and the aisles vaulted. In 1160 the nave was vaulted, the walls

Abbaye aux Hommes.

refaced, the enormous triforium added. The choir was built about 1210, and the spires belong to the same period: there was once a central spire also, but it succumbed in the sixteenth century.

To return to the abbey. Gislebert, the third abbot, was accused of gluttony, unjustly, it would seem, and on the mere arbitrary ground of his fatness. An enemy wrote some jingling Latin verses on the subject, some of which are funny, as, for instance:—

"Corpus tam crassum non est jejunia passum:
Si jejunasses, carnem macie tenuasses!"

Or this indictment of his sporting tendencies:—

"Ex avium ludo sua pendet sollicitudo."

Up to the time of the Hundred Years War, Caen and its abbeys continued to flourish: but in 1346 the English entered the almost defenceless town, without troubling to take the castle. The citizens opposed them doggedly, and after the men had been defeated in battle, the women turned each house into a fortress, whence stones and even furniture were thrown upon the English. Edward III. retaliated by sacking the town, and the treasure which he carried off to his fleet at Ouistreham shows how rich the burghers of Caen had become. Of cloth alone there were 40,000 pieces. When the enemy was gone, more attention was given to fortification, and the abbey walls were enormously strengthened. They were needed in the years that followed.

We must pass over many centuries, to the time of the Revolution, when the eighteen remaining monks of St. Etienne, after making a solemn declaration of fidelity to their order, paid their last visit to the cloisters and cells and majestic church which they had loved so well, and went forth into the world.

The abbey buildings now do useful work as a *Lycée*. Like those of the sister foundation they were built in the beginning of the eighteenth century, and their size may be gathered

from the fact that 600 boys are at school here. They are indeed a stately product of France's stateliest age. They remain much as they have always been, spacious and simple. The Parloir alone has much decoration, the rest has only excellent panelling of the period, vaulted ceilings, and a few large pictures. In the cloister is a clock, and under it a long list of the various Masses that were to be said, with spaces for the names of the celebrants, deacons, chanters and other assistants. The old chapter-house is used as a chapel; in the sacristy is one of those curious pictures which are intended to deceive the eye with the im-

A street in Caen.

pression of another chamber beyond. The refectory is another fine room; but perhaps the hanging stair-cases are the most striking feature of the abbey, one in particular winds round its four walls with hardly any apparent support, though whether this *tour de force* is an artistic virtue I will not say. The excellent ironwork of its balustrade was wrought by a monk who had his forge in the abbey.

The Abbaye aux Dames was begun in 1062. Four years later it was dedicated with much state in the presence of the Conqueror and his Queen and a great concourse of barons and ecclesiastics. The ceremony was closed with a touching scene: William presented his little daughter Cecilia at the altar, to be dedicated henceforward to God in the bonds of holy religion. The child was taken into the new convent, and there soon followed her many other daughters of the great folk, who copied the example of the Duke of Normandy. Such a proceeding was not so oppressive then as it would seem now-a-days. There was much to make the life of the world undesirable to women of gentle birth; and many who at the present time would discover no vocation for the cloistered life were in the rough hard days of an earlier age glad enough to leave the cheerless cells and constant anxieties of a feudal keep for the cultivated and dignified peace of the cloister. A woman certainly enjoyed more "rights" in a convent, especially in such an aristocratic house as the Abbaye aux Dames: she belonged more to herself in belonging more to the Church, and might well give up cheerfully the prospect of becoming the chattel of some unattractive and bloodthirsty baron.

The little Princess Cecilia became the second abbess of the Trinité, and, as such, a person of independence and importance. Indeed, during the three days of the Fair of the Holy Trinity, the arms of the abbess were set up on the city gates, and she enjoyed complete jurisdiction over Caen, together with all the city dues; even the officer in command,

Caen: Abbaye aux Dames.

were he governor of the province or a marshal of France, had to come to her for the watchword, right down to the time of the Revolution.

Once a year the abbess herself was deposed. This was the "Fête de la Petite Abbesse." At the first vespers of Holy Innocents' Day, when the verse was reached, "*He hath put down the mighty from their seat,*" the abbess left her stall, and summoned thither the "little abbess" who had been chosen from among the younger girls in the convent. The little abbess held sway with great pomp for twenty-four hours, during which time not the abbey only but the whole town gave itself up to merry-making. But next day, when the same verse came round again, "*Deposuit potentes,*" the little abbess gave up her brief sovereignty, and the triumph of childhood was brought to an end.

Queen Matilda's wish had been that she should rest, not beside her lonely husband in St. Etienne, but here in her own foundation of la Trinité. She left her crown and jewels to the abbey, and there her body was laid to rest within the walls that were for so many centuries to shelter the highest born ladies of France. The Protestants cheerfully rifled the Queen's tomb; but her bones were gathered together by pious hands, and replaced soon after by the Abbess Anne de Montmorency. (What a name Montmorency is in the sixteenth century!) At the Revolution the second tomb was destroyed; but the remains were again preserved, and in 1819 the present monument was placed over them. The black marble slab, however, is part of the original tomb, and its inscription is a fine example of the eleventh century lettering.

And what is the abbey now? The church has suffered from a restoration, but is otherwise intact; and the abbey itself is one of the most interesting things in Caen. Like its companion, St. Etienne, the church as we see it belongs to the second and third periods of Norman architecture; but the builders seem to have determined to make the two as unlike

as possible ; Ste. Trinité is smaller, lighter, more feminine than St. Etienne ; instead of simple capitals it has elaborate ones, instead of a massive deep triforium it has nothing but a slight arcade, and all its features have a similar distinction.

To visit the most interesting part of the Abbaye aux Dames we must apply to the *concierge* of the Hôtel-Dieu at the side of the church. For the transepts and choir are partitioned off from the nave and are used by the nuns who serve this hospital. Thus the desolate condition of most old abbeys is not here : the place is alive, and in it devoted women still lead their own lives and are busy with their work of mercy. The enormous abbey buildings belong to the first years of the eighteenth century, and are particularly well adapted for hospital work. We go through the noble cloister to a pillared portico, whence the door of the north transept is reached. The transepts are used by the patients, who are kneeling here to say their rosaries. At the east of the south transept is an Early French chapel, which was once the chapter-house. Visitors are not allowed to enter the choir, but a curtain is lifted from the wooden grating, and we can see the tomb of Queen Matilda in the midst of the stalls, where one or two of the sisters kneel, deep in prayer. From the chapel we are taken through another wing of the cloister, and across a courtyard (where the convalescents in their blue coats and white night-caps are gossiping under the trees) to the park, a huge quadrangle of trees. At the side of the park is a little mound, up which a path winds round and round between hedges, and the top is covered by an old yew-tree as with a tent. From here the spires of Caen can be seen, and all the country about, while nearer in is the varied surface of the kitchen gardens, surrounded by old walls ; and in one corner lies the little triangular cemetery, where the small black crosses tell of those who are content to leave their memory in God's hands. We can go through the pathetic children's ward, and their little garden, if we like, before we leave ; and at the door of the

hospital a nun, in the white habit and black veil of the order, will thank us gracefully for anything we like to give "*pour les pauvres.*"

St. Pierre is the principal church of Caen. Its sides are a little marred by the loss of some tracery, but it has two features which alone would place it in the front rank,—its spire and *chevet*. The tower and spire, which are all the more imposing because they are detached from the church, were built in 1308, but are quite in the style of the thirteenth century. The spire especially is a triumph of architectural skill. It is absolutely devoid of any supports within, and consists just of the eight triangular stone sides, which are only sixteen centimetres thick. They shoot up till they meet together at the height of 246 feet above the ground. Yet, light and lovely as is this audacious pyramid of thin masonry, it is so tough and well-poised that the wind and wear of seven centuries have never shaken it. It even underwent bombardment: in 1563, that memorable year for the Caennais, Admiral Coligny placed some men on the tower to fire at the castle; the castle naturally responded with its cannon, and made several large holes, which actually were left unmended for more than a hundred years.

In 1549 a Breton lad, named Jean Gladran, climbed to the top of this spire without any kind of ladder. The weather-cock was stuck, and Gladran was sent to fetch it down; he lowered it by means of a cord which he wore round his waist; then, when it had been mended and gilt, he climbed up the spire again as if it were a ladder, sat on the top, and hauled up the weather-cock with his cord. When he had fixed it in position, he turned it first with his hand and then (the very thought makes one giddy!) with his foot. After further disporting himself with singing a few songs, he climbed down from the height which had made him famous. But the historian of Caen voices the ungrateful spirit of the grovelling multitude with the verdict,—"*Il auoit vn cerueau bienasseuré, et plus de*

témérité que de sagesse."

Hector Sohier, a native of Caen, built the *chevet* in 1521, and it is a gorgeous example of the eccentric luxuriance which is the mark of François Premier architecture. When I say that he built it, I must confess that most of what he set up is at the present moment in a shed near the church, because the State has presented the church with a copy of it instead. The chapels have angular sides, and the upper story of the Lady Chapel forms, like that at Wells, a complete octagon separate from the choir; this part is pierced with round windows, which contain four circles by way of tracery, but

Caen: Spire of St. Pierre

the other windows are marked by an absence of tracery that is characteristic of Sohier. The parapets are the most striking feature, with their elaborate arabesque ornament, and their pinnacles of the "candelabrum" type. The candelabra standing thus about the chapel roof have perhaps a symbolical purpose; certainly the whole effect is one of extreme delicacy and refinement.

Until about forty years ago a branch of the river ran under the *chevet* in the space now occupied by the Boulevard St. Pierre; the appearance of Sohier's work as it rose above the water and of the old houses and the steps down to the river was most beautiful. But for some miserable reason the river has been covered up. There is, however, a pleasant garden on the south side of the church, where is the porch at which criminals used to stop to make the *amende honorable* on their way to the scaffold.

As for the interior of St. Pierre, it has been accused of looking more like an alhambra than a church, and of containing things more curious than devotional. This is perhaps true of the eastern chapels, where can be found many heathen gods. There is indeed fantasy enough here and in the strip of stone lace-work that adorns the apse. The vaulting is extraordinary, most of all in the chapels, where the curved ribs carry a flat ceiling, and are weighted with preposterous pendents. These pendents, fulfilling no structural purpose, are a source of danger to those who pass underneath; they have, indeed, often fallen, and soon after their erection one killed an unfortunate man in its descent.

I wonder if the people who kneel here to worship have ever given a thought to the extraordinary subjects which are carved on the cap of the third pier of the nave. Perhaps not, for the treatment is obscure enough, and does not appeal to the eye like the rabbits of the second cap. The subjects are a phœnix, a unicorn, a pelican, and three stories, Lancelot crossing the lake on a huge sword to deliver Guinevere, and the two following anecdotes, which were very popular at the time.

Aristotle having reproved Alexander the Great for suffering love to make him lazy, the monarch decided to see his mistress no more. But this lady, burning with a natural desire for vengeance, determined on the most biting form of all—she would make the philosopher fall in love with her. Cunningly accoutred, she met him and conquered. She then told him that she was possessed with a fantastic idea, she would like to ride about with the philosopher for a horse. He could refuse nothing. Saddled, bridled, and ridiculous, he crawled about on all-fours, the lady singing triumphantly on his back. Then Alexander was sent for, and the philosopher disappeared, red as a sunset, amid mocking laughter.

The story of Hippocrates bears a like moral. The great physician had a statue set up to him in Rome, and was almost deified. A Gaulish woman, the Emperor's mistress, was jealous of such worship, and determined to make a fool of its object. So she, too, made him fall in love with her, and told him to bring a basket to the foot of the tower where she lived; into this basket he was to creep, while she let down a cord to pull him up withal. The infatuated physician did as he was bidden; but when the basket had been raised to mid-air it stopped, and Hippocrates was left to endure the jeers of all Rome when day broke next morning.

I think that an artist set down in Caen to draw pictures of entire churches would choose those which are desecrated. It is a melancholy fact, but these are the buildings which have retained most of their original beauty, and have, in addition to the freedom and absence of self-consciousness which is the true artist's mark upon them, that added charm which time alone can give. St. Etienne-le-Vieux, St. Gilles, the Halle au Blé, and St. Nicholas have indeed suffered from neglect and base uses, but in all their degradation they have been spared the last and worst.

St. Etienne-le-Vieux is near the Abbaye aux Hommes. It was built with the help of Henry VI. in 1426, to replace an

older church which had been ruined by Henry V. in the siege of 1417, owing to its proximity to the city walls. From it we can look down the Rue de Caumont, which I think is one of the prettiest streets in Caen, though there is nothing in it to be signalled in a guide-book except the fourteenth century buildings of the Collège du Mont (now a Museum) opposite the irregular east end of the church. From the south-west, one has a good sight of St. Etienne-le-Vieux, its octagonal lantern, and the gutters that carry the rain water through the pinnacles to the gargoyles' jaws.

St. Gilles grew up under the shadow of the Abbaye aux Dames, and owed its dedication to the fact that the body of St. Giles was preserved in the abbey itself. The disappearance of that precious relic is a curious instance of the danger which lies in over precaution. During the wars of religion the relic was given to a nun, with orders to hide it with the greatest care so that it might be preserved from the Protestants. So faithful was she to her charge that she did not even talk about it. No one but this one nun knew where it was hid, and when she died shortly afterwards she carried the secret with her. Peace and security returned to the abbey ; but the body of St. Gilles could nowhere be found.

Gombard, the curé of St. Gilles at the Revolution, is still remembered in Caen as a martyr. He refused to take the oath, was arrested just as he was about to leave the country, and executed at Caen in April, 1793.

In 1864 the choir with its fine *chevet* was pulled down, in order to improve the view ! At first sight the church looks entirely Flamboyant, but the saw-edged cornice betrays the twelfth century. The south doorway, which was added in the sixteenth century just at the last flicker of Gothic art, is extremely original : a low arch is set between two buttresses, and the stonework above adorned with exceedingly beautiful carving and a finial with a pedestal.

The Halle au Blé, almost buried behind parasitic houses, was

formerly the church of Saint-Sauveur-au-Marché. There is a curious story of a certain François Boisne, Rector of Caen University, who was buried here in 1753. The ceremony was one of unheard of magnificence; for it was a tradition at Caen that should the Rector happen to die during his term of office, his obsequies should be "like those of a king." Therefore the University, whenever a Rector was ill, hastened to appoint another, lest the invalid by dying while still rector should plunge them in the ruinous costs of a royal funeral. But in 1753 a Rector did manage to die in office. He was killed while

Caen: St. Pierre from the Marché au Bois.

hunting: but the rumour spread about, and was widely believed, that he had really committed suicide, in order to enjoy the luxury of a gorgeous funeral!

In 1812, a time of great distress, when corn was double the usual price, a mob made a demonstration in the Halle, and afterwards proceeded to a neighbouring mill, but without doing any serious harm. The Préfet, however, felt insulted, and sent up to Paris a grossly exaggerated account of the facts. In a few days the peaceful inhabitants of Caen were amazed by the arrival of Napoleon's aide-de-camp with a large body of soldiers. A number of people were arrested, and given the short joys of a military trial. Some were imprisoned, and, incredible as it seems, eight (four of whom were women) were condemned to death and executed the same morning. One lad of nineteen struggled against his executioners, crying out, "Don't kill me! Don't kill me!" and adding bitterly, "*Envoyez moi plutôt à l'armée. On n'en revient jamais!*" And one person was executed by mistake, owing to the hurry.

St. Nicholas was built by the monks of St. Etienne for the population that grew up rapidly round the abbey. It is one of the most curious specimens of Norman architecture, and the more interesting because it has undergone few modifications, and the precise date of its completion (1093) is known. The nave and transepts have the same plain round windows and flat buttresses as St. Etienne; but, unlike the mother church, it retains its three round Norman apses. These are curious and beautiful, the small apses are plain, the central one is decorated with three arcades; no doubt the high conical roofs are a somewhat later addition. The west front has an exceedingly uncommon porch, which is more like an aisle let into it than anything else. By way of contrast a Flamboyant tower disports itself at the south-west corner of the church.

Two churches in Caen, St. Jean and St. Sauveur, lying somewhat in the back-water of public interest, have passed the nineteenth century almost unscathed. St. Jean rejoices in two

remarkable towers ; the central one has a top story, which, to judge by its pinnacles, was to have been a triumph of the François I. style, but it stopped as suddenly as the Tower of Babel, and its unfinished windows stick up like exaggerated battlements. The western one is a real leaning tower, its inclination is not quite eight feet, rather less than half that of Pisa ; but this peculiarity must not make us overlook its other qualities. Indeed, the whole church is picturesque, and there is a noticeable corner at the back entrance behind the choir.

The character of the interior is mainly due to its parapeted galleries, and to the length of the choir, which is, in fact, greater than that of the nave. The baptistery was once the bakers' chapel, and on its eastern arch are carved some curious mementoes of their trade, little cakes and a pastry-cutter. Inside this chapel there is a statue of our Lady, to which the people of Vaucelles used to resort in time of plague, in the days when it stood over the Porte Millet, one of the city gates.

St. Sauveur used to be called Notre-Dame de Froide Rue—a quaint title that well suits its character. The east end, which, like the spire, has some points of resemblance with St. Pierre, is on the Rue St. Pierre ; but it is in the old Rue Froide that the spirit of the place comes upon us. The church rubs shoulders with the street in a familiar, homely way, that takes us straight back to the middle ages. We are in the time when religion and common life were more closely intermingled, and men made beautiful things without thinking it necessary to rail them in, and without self-consciousness. That spiral staircase, for instance, let into the wall so quietly, so charmingly—the man who made it did not think about fine-art societies, or the critics, or the Legion of Honour, and probably did not know that he was creating a *chef-d'œuvre* ; he just wanted to make a way by which the gallery could be reached, and he made it this way because it gave him joy to use his wits. The internal gallery is gone now, and whether it was for relics or for a private pew we do not know, but the staircase remains.

The same engaging absence of formality is more marked inside the church. You open the door, and you do not know where you are; there are altars and spreading steps, and aisles and a gallery, but none of the ordinary landmarks of a church. You explore a little further, and you find that the confusion is caused not so much by a want of unity as by an absolute duality. It is not one church, but two, standing side by side, which once communicated only in the western part, and then were thrown into one by a tremendous arch which cuts out the whole eastern partition wall that had separated the two choirs. And there they stand, these two choirs, in the oddest rivalry; one is Flamboyant, with brilliant glass (and this has stalls like a real choir), the other is Caen Renaissance. The roofs are wooden; and, though stone vaulting is beyond criticism, I confess that a building with a wooden roof always has a charm of its own for me. And now you will appreciate better the contrast of the two apses in the Rue St. Pierre, the candelabra of the Sohier school, and the quite exquisite naturalistic carving round the Gothic window.

Most visitors at Caen go out to the suburb of Vaucelles, where the station is, to see St. Michel de Vaucelles. It is well placed on high ground, and is a mixture of styles—a Norman tower is overtopped by a fifteenth century choir, and a Renaissance nave ends in a tower of the time of Louis XVI. Inside, the nave and its aisles are much lower than the choir. The pulpit is one of the best examples you can see of seventeenth century woodwork, as light in general effect as it is graceful in the detail of its carving. On the easternmost boss of the choir is carved a St. Michael, and round him are painted the saints who were patrons of the various confraternities united to that of St. Michael. The paintings belong to the middle of the sixteenth century. In one of the statutes of the confraternity a century earlier are preserved the names of the patrons—"Monsieur saint Michel archange, Monsieur saint Jehan-Baptiste, Monsieur saint Pierre et Monsieur saint Paul,"

St. Sauveur, Caen.

ending with "Monsieur saint Sébastien et Madame sainte Anne."

It is worth while to compare with the old churches the late seventeenth century *église de la Gloriette*, which is a very typical specimen of the "Jesuit" style. All the other churches are more or less defaced by the furniture which modern Romanism requires. But this has no clash of inappropriate decoration; it has an effect, a rather theatrical effect, and a certain dignity of its own, because it is at unity with itself, and its florid altar suits the temple which contains it with such an air of ample prosperity.

Caen was once walled, and protected by a castle and by many towers large and small; even the two monasteries at the east and west were fortified also, the Abbaye aux Dames (as befitted the weaker sex) having a special fortress all to itself. The castle, whose walls towered over us as we first came in by the Rue de Geôle, is a very large place, founded by the Conqueror, enlarged afterwards, and now modernised. There are some fifteenth century towers still standing, and the Porte de Secours is a very picturesque example of the period, but any attempt to sketch or photograph it will probably lead to your arrest: it is reached from the Rue des Fossés, which is well named, for the moat which isolates this gateway is very wide and deep. The castle is now used as a barrack, and cannot be entered without permission from the commandant.

The Tour le Roy is the one important relic of the ancient city fortifications. It stands at the side of the Boulevard St. Pierre, a melancholy shadow of what it was, sunk now in the new road, so that its proportions are destroyed, and restored with unreal battlements. The rings on its outer side remind one that the river once ran at its foot.

If one was asked what was the special architectural distinction of Caen, I think one would have to put aside all its fine churches, and point to the Renaissance *hôtels*, which bear the names of la Monnaie, Moindrainville, Escoville, and Than.

For they are altogether *sui generis :* like the kindred mansions of Fontaine-Henri and Lasson which we saw on the road, they are the work of those artists of the François Premier period who determined to produce houses of an entirely new character.

These palaces were built by the merchant princes who flourished so magnificently in the France of the Renaissance. Those great tradesmen were *bourgeois* only in the sense that they lived in cities, while the *noblesse* lived in the country. At what age, I wonder, did the word *bourgeois* come to connote vulgarity? In the sixteenth century it spoke rather of refinement and a magnificent devotion to the arts.

Etienne Duval, the merchant who built the Hôtel de la Monnaie, was also a Protestant, like so many of the commercial men of France at this time. Yet Protestantism, which spells destruction in French as in English history, did not prevent him from the construction of the most sumptuous and beautiful works of art. If public and religious buildings were destroyed, private and secular ones were erected under the auspices of the new movement in life and religion. Etienne was left in 1531 in possession of a rich trading business at the age of twenty-three : by his genius for affairs he spread its operations, till it reached not only all over France, but to Africa and the New World. He was ennobled in 1549, but his dazzling prosperity made him enemies ; charges were trumped up against him, and at one time he was condemned to exile and the confiscation of all his goods. The disgrace shortly after of the unscrupulous chancellor Poyet, who had issued this iniquitous decree, gave Duval the opportunity of getting it annulled. His prosperity became greater than before ; and he was able in 1553 to place his country under great obligations to him by revictualling and thus saving the town of Metz during its siege by the Emperor Charles V. : the forethought and thoroughness with which he accomplished this difficult task explain his success as a merchant.

Yet only two years later his enemies were at him again, and it cost him much money and some durance in Caen castle before he had shaken off their charges. Twenty years later, we see him an old man, rich, respected, charitable, erect in bearing as in conduct. At the age of seventy-one he died, leaving two sons, the eldest of whom, Jacques, had already after an adventurous career received many honours from the King, and sixteen wounds from the Germans at Chalons-sur-Marne.

The extent of Etienne's establishment may be gathered by walking through the tunnels just beyond the Café du Grand-Balcon and looking at the houses which still remain behind the café. But the two most interesting parts of this merchant-palace are reached by the Cour de la Monnaie, a few yards further on. In this court we come suddenly upon a small but remarkable house on the right hand. This is the Hôtel de la Monnaie. It is, I think, the prettiest of them all; the two round towers are most charmingly disposed, and one hardly knows which to like best, the plain one in the corner with its round windows and elegant cornice, or the dainty central turret, on the little cupola of which is a small broken statue. I suppose when the restorers come this way, they will have no difficulty in evolving an exact facsimile of this statue from their inner consciousness.

Just across the street is the *Imprimerie Domin*, which contains the Hôtel de Mondrainville, a banqueting house, or casino, set apart for feasts and pleasure: the three big arches of its lower story must have made a fine dining-room; and we can just imagine what the whole place looked like, before any buildings were near to block the view of the corner staircase with its open dome, when it stood, separate from the rest of the establishment, in a pleasaunce of its own.

The Le Valois, who built the Hôtel d'Escoville, were also of the Reformed Religion, and owed their riches to commerce. Their successors in the hôtel in 1606 were the Moisant, another Huguenot merchant family. The second of this name,

Jacques Moisant, Sieur de Brieux, was a prominent writer, critic, and Mæcenas of his day, a learned man and a lover of beautiful things: in his time the Hôtel d'Escoville became a brilliant centre of the literary world.

This Hôtel of the Valois (now used as the Bourse) is the most imposing of the Renaissance palaces, though the façade opposite St. Pierre is defaced by the ensigns which modern shopkeepers seem to consider necessary to the success of their business, and the interior quadrangle is now undergoing restoration. It was built at the same time as that of Duval, to wit, in 1537. Entering the courtyard, we have the most interesting part of the hôtel before us. Out of the roof rises a huge dormer window which M. Palustre characterises as "*la plus grande et la plus magnifique lucarne qui soit jamais sorti de l'imagination d'un artiste.*" At one corner the principal entrance leads to a winding staircase, of which the steps are worn so thin that one seems to be walking on the clouds: two handsome cupolas crown the staircase. On the right wing statues are set between the windows, the oddly chosen subjects being the two great beheaders—David holding the head of Goliath, and Judith that of Holofernes. They are excellently carved, and so are the minor sculptures of Andromeda and Europa. It has been suggested that the coats of arms above are a little too prominent, as if the artist knew the weakness of the recently ennobled Valois.

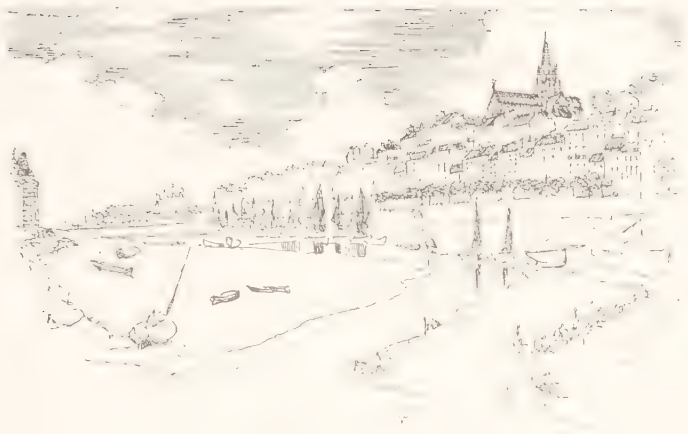
The Hôtel de Than, which is at the beginning of the Rue St. Jean, is another product of the age of François I. Its windows have those intersecting mouldings that one notices in a good many Caen houses; and climbing in and out of the weather mouldings are all manner of creatures, such as a snail, a lion, and a dog biting a bone in a very dog-like fashion. The medallions also are noticeable, and the gables, which are like Palissy ware and may have been modelled on it.

Caen abounds also in less important houses, and in courtyards, which we shall miss if we hesitate to explore those

tunnels that one sees everywhere among the houses. For instance, nearly opposite the Hôtel de Than, at No. 37, Rue St. Jean, one of these tunnels leads to a very fine late Gothic house, which we may not even notice unless we turn right round as soon as we have immerged into the court. There are numberless other dwellings, unknown to fame, as, for instance, the nice little house next door to St. Jean, which bears the date 1739, and is a good example of the period. But there are several which everybody goes to see, as the two richly carved wooden houses, 52 and 54, Rue St. Pierre, and the other half-timbered Maison des Quatrains in the Rue de Geôle. In the last street there is a small but remarkable stone house (No. 17), which was built for the father of Jacques de Cabaignes, as he tells us, by Abel le Prestre. There can be little doubt that this house and the Maison des Gens d'Armes (p. 240), are by the same artist: there are the same beautiful sculptured heads within medallions, the same legends of conquest, *Amor vincit mundum*, *Pudicitia vincit amorem*, *Amor vincit pudicitiam*, *Fama vincit mortem* (p. 291). On the lintel a monkey disports himself with a dolphin.

I think that streets are better than houses, and the Rue de Geôle and the Rue Froide—both beautiful themselves—enclose a charming group of old streets. An alley, the Venelle Bons Amis, leads to the Rue des Teinturiers, and from here the more aristocratic Rue des Cordeliers, which contains the Louis XIII Hôtel de Colomby, runs into the Rue Froide, where a house, true to the traditions of Notre-Dame de Froide Rue, sports two rival dormers, one Gothic and one classical.

But, in truth, the best charms of a town cannot be ticketed. We must wander about for ourselves, and invite our souls: and we can always end with a ride under the trees of the Grand Cours, where the Orne is ever full, and well kept gardens run down to the river's brink.



Trouville, Inner Harbour.

CHAPTER X

CAEN TO HONFLEUR, PONT-AUDEMER, BEC, AND ROUEN

ARE there any who do not feel a certain pleasure at immerging into the full current of modern life, after long travel in remoter parts, where one met only farmers and commercial travellers, and saw little that had not some serious interest? I have known those who have come to long for the flesh-pots of Egypt, whose hearts have gladdened at the sight of a *casino*, from sheer weariness of Romanesque churches. Your soul, good reader, is, I know, not made of such gross stuff; and yet I shall not be surprised if you too find the ride from Caen to Honfleur the most pleasant you have yet made. For the sea is always lovely, and this particular journey is through the prettiest and most varied roads that ever defied the wind.

It is difficult to describe the chain of *plages* that lie between the mouths of the Orne and the Seine. The time when Isabey and the *paysagistes* discovered the coasts of the Pays d'Auge and Lieuvin is already the forgotten past; for, as M. Robida says in his engaging work, "La Vieille France," ten years suffice in these parts to change the face of nature; the villa villages are

like American cities in their mushroom growth. They form, he says, "*le 'Far West' de la France, enfin, mais un Far West de fantasie, de luxe, et de high-life.*" Let us then be content to think of this string of watering-places as *un Far West de high-life*; only it has this distinction, that its creators have been careful to plant trees before they built their villas, and so have avoided the bare and cheerless appearance which generally accompanies seaside enterprise in England. The villas for which the neighbourhood of Trouville is famous are replete with architectural enormities, and are nearly all spoilt by a certain pinched appearance which makes the best of them inferior to such of our own domestic architecture as is free from the jerry builder; yet the beauty of the shores and the abundance of greenery make these new *stations balnéaires* almost worthy to stand between the hills and the sea.

The journey from Caen to Honfleur is only thirty-four miles, but ladies and lazy folk can go as far as Dives in the steam "tramway," which is the pleasantest form of mechanical travelling yet invented. Only they may then miss the very characteristic view of Caen from the canal.

The canal is, indeed, a fresh experience. We turn off from the inner basin where the ships are resting, and we find ourselves in Holland, a broad stretch of blue water and an avenue by the side. So it continues down to the sea, with slight deviations here and there—on the one side the lazy water, and on the other rows of silver beeches, with farms and orchards beyond.

But we must turn off when we are a very little way out of Caen to see our first villa. It is a good deal older and more solid than those on the seashore, and even more fantastic. La Maison des Gens d'Armes is its name, and it was built (I need hardly say, in the reign of François I), by one Girard de Nollent. The two battlemented towers connected by a battlemented wall look martial enough; but the queer stone figures of men-at-arms (whence its name) tell us that nothing more

real than they ever threatened the passer by from the summits of those towers. It was an expensive freak, even for that age, and one cannot see much point in it, or much comfort either; but the medallions which are inserted in the merlons are really worth seeing. Their borders, which show great inventive power, contain heads of men and women, arrayed in most

Ouistreham

varied caps and helmets. Some are of great beauty, as the two which face down the road on the outside of each tower; some are curious, as the "three-headed "IANVS," or the woman with two men kissing her. The meaning of this last is uncertain; she bears Nollent's initials "N. G." on her forehead. There is a shield on one tower, and the salamander, François I.'s badge, can be traced on it. The legends of conquest (p. 291) appear on several of the medallions.

The road by the canal leads straight on to Ouistreham, the ancient port of Caen; it is two or three miles out of our way, for we shall have to come back to where the tram-line branches off to the right in order to reach Dives. We can go right past Ouistreham to the jetty by the sea, whence there is a fine view of the curve where Cabourg, Villers, and Trouville lie at the foot of the hills: Trouville is the last town in sight, but the

cape which shelters Le Havre at the further side of the Seine mouth can be clearly seen in the distance.

The village of Ouistreham, which is about a *kilomètre* inland, stands on very ancient soil, as is testified by its Roman camp and the many coins and pots that have been dug up. It contains a fine specimen of a twelfth century Norman church. The triforium is of unusual form, and under it runs a pretty string which is one of the few bits of carving that the restoring hand of Ruprich-Robert has not spoilt: there is a stoup in the

Walled Farm, near Caen.

south aisle formed by a dolphin standing on his head, with a shell inserted on his tail.

Ouistreham is the scene of the last act of the Hundred Years War; for it was here that the English garrison, having been forced to surrender Caen and make terms, embarked in July, 1450, and sailed away from the country it had ruined.

In 1762 the English were about these parts again, Admiral Rodney having been sent to reduce Havre and generally knock the bottom out of the proposed invasion of England. It was at Ouistreham that a French sergeant named Cabieu immortalised himself. Rodney sent a party ashore to burn the village. Two of the forts were already taken by surprise, when Cabieu, hearing some shots which the defenders had managed to fire by way of alarm, set out alone to meet the enemy. The night was dark. Cabieu had not only his gun, but what was of more value, a drum and a good voice. He fired his gun at the English,

made a terrific noise with his drum, and shouted words of command. The English thought a considerable force was upon them, and fled back to their boats, leaving one officer wounded behind them. For many a long year "*le brave Cabieu*," who had saved Ouistreham from fire and pillage, was the hero of these parts, pensioned and praised by King, Convention, and Emperor in turn.

The Church at Dives.

Those who make a special excursion to Ouistreham from Caen should return to Caen by the high road, passing near the Norman church of Biéville, and a good specimen of the six-

teenth century manor or farmhouse which Mr. Pennell has drawn for us. But to reach Dives on our way to Trouville we have now to go back by the branch road and follow the tramline that leads past the sands and lagoons of the mouth of the Orne. The villas soon begin to appear, and before reaching Dives we pass outside Cabourg, which is shaped like a spider's web, avenues of trees forming the web, while the Casino represents the hungry spider.

Dives is famous in history as the port from which William the Conqueror sailed for England; but, like Pevensey, where

Trouville.

he landed, it has long been deserted by the sea. It contains a fine old inn, which is exceedingly charming, though the antiquary may shrug his shoulders at the imported curiosities with which it is so profusely adorned. The church, too, is good, but the most curious thing in Dives is the old market, a long roof resting on a wooden framework; it is not so beautiful as the *Halles* of St. Pierre-sur-Dives, which we have already seen, but is the largest in Normandy.

From Houlgate the road winds up among high hills to descend into Villers-sur-Mer, another old village transformed into a watering-place.

Trouville is now before us at the end of a level road, along which the blustering motor cars dash their anxious, spectacled passengers, leaving a pungent smell and a cloud of dust behind

them. Villas and chalets abound, and we reach Deauville, the town of villas, where rich Parisians take the air and the sea-water in quiet seclusion. Trouville is just a collection of a few streets, encircled by luxurious toy-houses, under a pretty hill; on one side is the river Touques, which separates it from Deauville, on the other the beach itself, a Mosaic city of tents upon the sand.

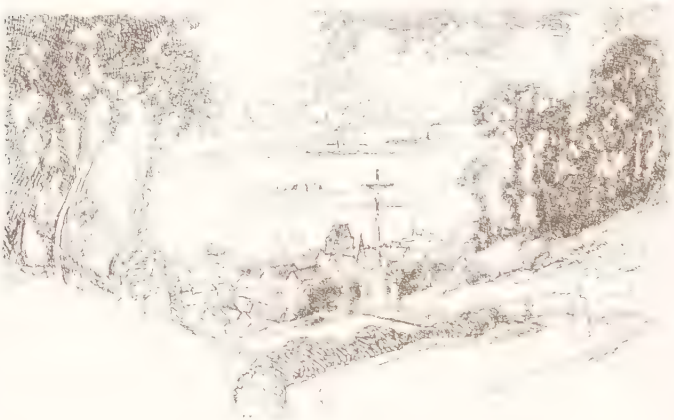
It is from Trouville that the prettiest part of the route begins. The road goes through woods and gardens the whole way,

The Beach, Trouville.

keeping near the sea but rather high above it. The air is sweet with the scent of flowers; and as our ride is drawing to its close, we see the red sun setting behind the sea through the gaps in the trees, or through high hedges of wild clematis. We have passed through many pleasant seaside towns, and the country inland is full of pretty walks and interesting places; but perhaps the sweetest of all is Villerville, which is built in a cleft of the hills some three miles beyond Trouville. From Criquebœuf, where a little ivy-covered church stands by the side of a large pond, the road passes through tunnels of trees, and brings us at last down to the curious old town of Honfleur.

Honfleur is a town of character. Although nothing remains of the fortifications which went through the troubles of the Hundred Years War, there is, near a row of curious high old

houses on the Quay, a singular fortress of the sixteenth century, called the Lieutenance, which once, under the name of the "Porte de Caen," kept watch against the invader. The neighbouring walls are gone, and it looks peaceful enough now. It once had a little belfry, but at present its only ornament is

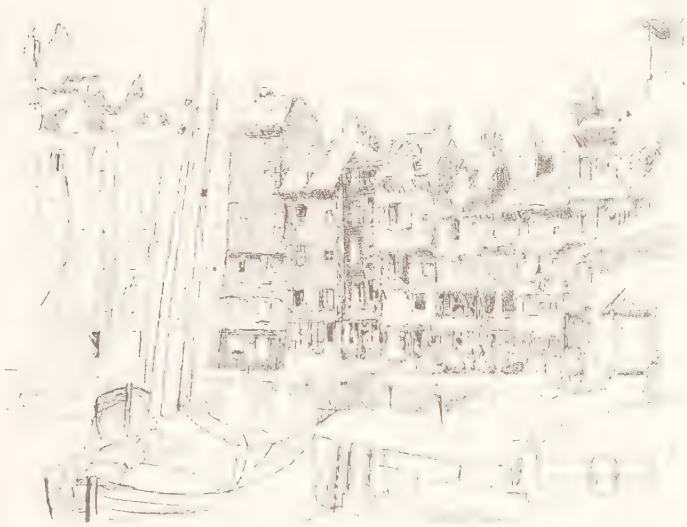


Looking towards Havre from Villerville.

an ancient Madonna, which was discovered in a cellar and set up in 1863.

The most remarkable building in Honfleur is the timber church of St. Catherine. Its tower stands right apart in the middle of the market place, with a spreading base of quaint shedding round its four sides. The church is entirely of timber, with the exception of a monstrously incongruous portico, and that is only a cemented sham. Some one also thought fit (in the 'twenties) to cover the great beams that take the place of piers with a lath and plaster casing which has the semblance of a Doric column; but even this could not destroy the unique effect of the interior, which is like that of some huge ship. The worst blow was when in 1879 the restless demon prompted some architect to pull down the old

choir and build a new one. This wrong cannot be undone, but it will be easy to remove the lath and plaster. St. Catherine consists of two naves, which were built in the second half of



Honfleur: In the old Harbour.

the fifteenth century, and of two low aisles which were added on either side in the sixteenth.

St. Léonard is worth seeing for its west front. The lower, flamboyant, part has an exceedingly high tympanum. Over it is a conspicuous clock, and a handsome classical tower which looks so important that the front seems only to exist as a base to it.

On the hill behind Honfleur is a very old place of pilgrimage. The chapel of Notre-Dame de Grâce belongs to the seventeenth century, but the site is much older, and the time when seafarers first began to make their vows here is lost in antiquity. The chapel is a very pretty little building, with a gentle

The Harbour, Honfleur.

rusticity that accords well with the venerable elms that over shadow its tower and hive-like porch.

There is not a patch of wall left bare inside ; every space is covered with marble *ex voto* tablets, and with quaint pictures of ships in terrific storms, presented by grateful skippers—"*Voeu*

Honfleur.

fait à Nᵗʳᵉ. Dame de Grâce." On the north of the chancel arch is the much venerated image of our Lady, framed in an armour of golden votive hearts.

There is from the terrace of Notre-Dame de Grâce a fine view of the hills on the opposite side of the Seine mouth, where Le Havre, and Graville, and Honfleur spire can be clearly seen.

If you want to shorten your travels you can cross over in the steamer from Honfleur to Le Havre, and thence ride by the Candebec road to Rouen. That is to say, if you have not time to take the big loop from Honfleur to Rouen and then back to Le Havre, you will have to cut the Pont-Audemer road, since no one can afford to miss that by Caudebec.

Anyhow, I shall sketch the Pont-Audemer route rather hurriedly, so as to bring it within this chapter. You can start from Honfleur by Fiquefleur and then take the direct road to

Tower of St. Catherine, Ho[illegible]

Pont-Audemer (fifteen miles in all); or you can go three miles further along the more interesting byway through Berville. It is a pleasant ride through the Roumois country, for the most part between fields of corn and clover, with a skirting of forests as it gets near to Rouen; and to the lover of things beautiful it offers the pretty village of Pont-Audemer itself,

Fishing Fleet, Honfleur Harbour.

with its remarkable church and lovely glass, the wood carving and glass at Bourg-Achard, the church and rood-loft of Moulineaux, and other things to be mentioned. Furthermore it admits of a digression from Pont-Audemer down the pleasant valley of the Risle to Bec-Hellouin, whence the main road may be regained above La Bouille, or less directly at Bourg-Achard.

Pont-Audemer is no mean city. It claims the glory of one of the great inventions of modern times, the sausage. Besides inaugurating this delicacy, it has had since the fourteenth century the distinction of giving birth to the founder of modern cookery, Taillevent. This personage, "*grand cuysinier du roy de France*," wrote the first cookery book in the French language,

Le Viandier Royal. The book lurked about in precious manuscripts till 1515, when the printer's art gave it to a hungry world. It continued to be reprinted throughout the century, but nowadays it is only useful as showing what progress the *science de la gueule* (as Montaigne calls it) has made since the simple age when Taillevent was the distinguished adviser of Charles V. Not content with this claim to culinary renown, Pont-Audemer also professes to have taught the pastrycooks of France how to make the *mirliton*. But perhaps it is better to let its reputation rest upon the ample foundations of its other and greater discovery.

The nave of the magnificent unfinished church of St. Ouen was begun about thirty years after Jeanne d'Arc had delivered France. The English had been driven out of Pont-Audemer; the rich merchants had settled down to their leather and cloth; and the sister arts of cookery and architecture regained their ascendency. In 1483 the new church was commenced. The work was carried on by the architects of Caudebec church in 1505, and to them is due the curious and delightful intermixture of Renaissance ornament which had become possible in these few years of rapid change. But, as so often in France, the ambitious burgesses of Pont-Audemer showed a want of staying power, and their grandiose plans dwindled into indolence. The small Norman choir escaped destruction, for no one had the energy to raise a new one in its place, and it had to be patched in the most prosaic manner on to the nave, leaving a big empty wall space, now occupied by a fatuous picture of the sacrifice of Isaac. The transepts were left incomplete; the nave, unvaulted and unfinished, has a makeshift clerestory—a sort of classical attic—instead of the florid windows which were to have continued the glories of the triforium. The architect had planned a church that would have been wonderfully and impossibly lofty: he was a man of genius, but one who did not reckon whither his imagination was leading him; and a compromise was inevitable at the finish. As for the west front, it is

as interesting and even more markedly frustrate, with only the beginnings of the sumptuous gallery that was to have joined the two towers—a beautiful unfinished essay, and no more. You can realise more of its profuse originality by studying its interior arrangements in the Baptistery chapel, where a magnificent balcony leads by a staircase (decorated even in its dark recesses) to the external gallery.

The glass belongs to that Renaissance period when the art reached such peculiar excellence, a beauty of strong and subtle colouring even better than that of Gothic times, with a new mastery of drawing that produced figures distinct and full of life. Sometimes it reminds one of the best efforts of our own Pre-Raphaelite artists, and it seems to me to be always the type which modern glass should try to rival. The window in St. Catherine's chapel (north aisle), is perhaps the best: the mystical subjects of its three divisions are—"*Devant la loy*," Adam and Eve, Abraham; "*Soubz la loy*," Moses, David, Samson, Isaiah and the burning coal, Elijah and the raven; "*Soubz la grâce*," a kneeling woman, representing the Church, surrounded by saints, nobles, and the four evangelists; above is the Christ appealing to the Eternal Father, an *asperges* brush in his left hand. In the south aisle are—(1) *The Confrèrie du St. Sacrement* (life of St. Ouen in the upper lights); (2) The Annunciation and Entombment, with date 1516; (3) Christ on the Lake, Death of St. Peter, Vision and Death of St. Paul, SS. John, Sebastian, Antony, and James the Greater; (4) Lives of SS. John the Evangelist, Nicholas, and Eustace, in the German style; (5) Death of our Lady, in the Italian style; (6) St. John the Baptist, by a Rouen artist, 1535, in the Flemish style.

The church of St. Germain dates from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries, but has suffered much during the nineteenth. There is an ox's head carved on the north wall, which is said to commemorate an incident in the building of the church. A merchant happened to be passing, on his way to Paris with a herd of oxen, just as the foundations were being laid. On the

Church of St. Ouen and Market, Pont-Audemer.

principle of stimulative generosity, which has been so much developed in our own scientific age, he promised that on his return from Paris he would give the price of one of his beasts, if the wall had by that time reached above the altar. The condition was fulfilled, the price was paid, and the mason set up the carving as a memorial of the merchant's act.

Every student of history will be tempted to make the digression to Bec-Hellouin, the abbey of Bec, of special interest to Englishmen as the home of two of our greatest archbishops,

Lanfranc and Anselm. And Bec has as great claims upon the gratitude of the French, for to it more than any other place is due the enormous progress both of learning and religion in Normandy during the eleventh century. Before its foundation, religion was at a very low ebb; archbishops of Rouen as well as humbler clergy led scandalous lives, monks were ignorant and brutish, the half-pirate warriors who ruled Normandy were worse, and, we are told, could not understand any one with a whole skin thinking of religion. When Herlwin died in 1078, the hundred and eighty monks whom he had got together at Bec were spreading their good influence far and wide, and the abbey had become a centre of education such as had never been known in Normandy before. Both nations owe thus a debt of gratitude to this great abbey, yet neither can claim much share in the honour of its foundation. There is nothing French about the name of Bec-Hellouin. The Beck or stream of Herlwin is a name Teutonic enough, and Herlwin was a man of the old Danish stock, with Flemish blood too, on his mother's side, while Anselm and Lanfranc were Italians, and it was Italian culture that they brought to the rude Northmen who gave their name to Normandy. It was, indeed, to the cosmopolitan hospitality of Bec that its special character is due: "Burgundians and Spaniards," Orderic tells us, "strangers from far and near, will answer for it how kindly they have been welcomed."

And who was Herlwin, the man who founded so powerful and comprehensive an institution? He was a soldier whose one ambition was to live humbly and forgotten and far from the unbridled life of his peers. Entirely simple, for all his experience of the world and natural gifts of practical wisdom, his only thought was to worship in peace, when, at the age of forty, he founded his first little retreat at Bonneville near Brionne, digging the foundations with his own hands. When this house was burnt down, he moved to the place on the "beck" which is now for ever associated with his name.

Herlwin and his two first companions were made monks in 1034. It was not long before Lanfranc came to bring the splendour of his gifts to the little community. A native of Pavia, Lanfranc began life as a lawyer whose skill no adversary could resist. After a while he left Italy and the law, to become a teacher. Wandering into France, he heard that there was great lack of learning in Normandy, and much money in consequence to be made there: so he set up a school at Avranches and soon became a famous professor. But he grew tired of the world, forgot his ambitions, and determined to seek refuge in the poorest and most despised monastery he could find. He left Avranches secretly for Rouen. As he was going through a forest on the banks of the Risle he was attacked by thieves, who stripped him and tied him to a tree. There he stood all through the night, bitterly regretting that he who had acquired such lore of earthly things could not repeat from memory the night offices of the Church. The morning found him with a deepened purpose of self-dedication: and when some passing woodmen released him, he begged them eagerly to tell him of some convent that was very poor and despised. They sent him to the little collection of sheds which sheltered Herlwin and his monks. The soldier-abbot, who happened to be building an

A By-road.

oven when Lanfranc presented himself, gave him a ready welcome. Each soon learnt to admire the other; while Herlwin in his noble simplicity recognised with joy the superior intellect of Lanfranc the new comer sat as a learner at his feet, knowing that the abbot could teach him a wisdom which was not to be learnt in the schools. In 1045 Lanfranc became prior under Herlwin, and directed the internal affairs of the monastery. His light could not be hid, and very soon Bec became a centre to which scholars flocked from all countries.

It became also a nursing ground for bishops. Among the novices who joined in Lanfranc's time was Anselm of Aosta, who was destined to succeed him both at Bec and at Canterbury. He became prior when Lanfranc was sent to Caen (p. 213), and held that office for fifteen years, till the death of Herlwin, and then for fifteen years more Anselm remained at Bec as abbot. As Lanfranc was greater than Herlwin, so was St. Anselm greater than Lanfranc. He embodied the highest ideals of the Middle Ages. We Englishmen perhaps remember him best as the archbishop who dared to thwart William Rufus; but he was even greater as a thinker than as a statesman. To a child-like singleness and tenderness of heart he joined, says Dean Church in his life of the saint, "an originality and power of thought which rank him, even to this day, among the few discoverers of new paths in philosophical speculation." Let me quote also a well-known passage from J. R. Green: "His famous works were the first attempts of any Christian thinker to elicit the idea of God from the very nature of the human reason. His passion for abstruse thought robbed him of food and sleep. Sometimes he could hardly pray. Often the night was a long watch till he could seize his conception and write it on the wax tablets which lay beside him. But not even a fever of intense thought such as this could draw Anselm's heart from its passionate tenderness and love. Sick monks in the infirmary could relish no drink save the juice which his hand had squeezed for them from the grape-bunch. In the later

days of his archbishoprick a hare chased by the hounds took refuge under his horse, and his voice grew loud as he forbade a huntsman to stir in the chase, while the creature darted off again to the woods. Even the greed of lands for the Church to which so many religious men yielded found its characteristic rebuke, as the battling lawyers saw Anselm quietly close his eyes in court and go peacefully to sleep."

The remaining history of the Abbey is like that of many others. During the Hundred Years War troubles began. Its position was a temptation to the combatants, who fortified it, and fought for it, till it had changed hands more than once, the monks being either killed or ejected, and the abbot at one time kept as a hostage at Rouen. When that war was over, the world completed by patronage the harm it had begun by pillage. The abbacy passed into the hands of great families, whose scions did not disdain to suck this rich plum at the price of a tonsure that was very lightly worn. The Abbot of Bec's duties were restricted to using the title when he had not a higher one, and drawing the salary in any case.

When the old foundation of Herlwin was stifled with its fatal grandeur to the point of death, fresh blood was put into it. In 1626 some monks of the reformed Congregation of St. Maur were brought over from Jumièges, and a new era of prosperity began for the abbey, as the present buildings witness. Once more Bec became famous for learning. It was a home of Jansenist theologians, though at this time it can hardly claim to have produced any great men, its one famous inmate, the author of *Manon Lescaut*, having soon left the cloister for which he was so unfitted.

Thus the great abbey passed into a serene old age, its conventual buildings, so eloquent of the formal dignity of the seventeenth century, tenanted by a community of monks who spent well the immense revenues which they still enjoyed. The Abbot, indeed, continued to be an occasional source of scandal. At one time a royal prince, the Comte de Clermont,

occupied this holy position. He is thus described by a contemporary :—"*Il est abbé, et jouit de plus de* 300,000 *livres de bénéfices. Il est cependant en habits brodés et galonnés avec une bourse à ses cheveux, et de plus est lieutenant-général des armées du roi.*"

It is difficult to decide whether the position is made better or worse by the fact that he held his military command by express permission of the Pope. But the irony of fate had something worse in store. The last abbot of Bec, the last successor of Herlwin, was Talleyrand !

As the end drew near, there must have been considerable slackness in the community of Bec. For when in 1790 the Revolution dissolved the legal force of monastic vows, only 27 monks were found in the cloister, and of these 18 took advantage of the opportunity to start life afresh. Two years later the nine faithful descendants of Herlwin and Anselm were driven out of their palatial home, and the whinny of horses has ever since taken the place of chanted prayer and psalmody.

It was not the Revolution, however, that destroyed the gorgeous abbey-church, which had once been the rival of St. Ouen itself, but the vulgar greed of the Empire. In 1809 it was deliberately pulled down, and sold for old lead and stone. In 1817 the Norman chapter-house, the oldest part of the abbey, was in like manner disposed of; it brought in the sum of 1,690 francs !

So it is that the only remaining parts of the Gothic buildings are the belfry-tower and the abbey-gate. The former was begun in 1467, in order to contain the bells, which were rendering the church towers unsafe. It stands at some distance from the site of the church, well buttressed in massive solitude, as though its builders were determined to have no more trouble from their bells. Its proportions cannot, however, be fairly judged now, for it once carried a wooden bell-chamber. A round staircase turret on one side, with a queer Chinese-looking stone top, relieves the severity of this stately tower; on the

The Belfry, Bec Hellouin.

buttresses are statues of saints, whose names are very distinctly set forth in graceful lettering of split flint. Such instances of the use of flint, familiar enough to Englishmen, are exceedingly rare in France. The abbey-gate is one of those charming bits of originality that everybody is tempted to make a picture of; it was built about 1485, but the arms are those of the Cardinal de Boissy, who was "abbot" in 1516: the tower on the right was used as a prison, that on the left as a porter's lodge.

The great classical abbey buildings are now a cavalry depôt, and one of the troopers will be glad to conduct you round them. They have all the spacious dignity of their period. The cloister was finished in 1666. The refectory, an enormously long room, now divided into stalls for the horses, was

not completed till 1747. In a field to the north is the entrance to the remarkable cellars of the abbey. The church of the pretty village contains the tomb of Herlwin, and a few relics of the later abbey, among which is a fine tabernacle door with the Descent from the Cross in enamel.

Although nothing is left of the days of Herlwin and Lanfranc, the place itself, which lies so prettily by the stream in its small and fertile valley, is the best memorial of the founders of Bec. A few miles further up, at Brionne, the warriors held their castle; but here all was quiet and gentle, and here the monks came to settle, because they found, as they would find still to-day, the three things they needed—wood, water, and peace.

Bourg-Achard lies straight on the high road from Pont-Audemer to Rouen, and you may pass its church without thinking to penetrate beyond the Sham-Flamboyant exterior. A newly-built tower fell in 1829, and destroyed most of the church, which was then rebuilt as you see. Yet the early sixteenth century choir remains with its windows and curious stalls, where, till the Revolution, the Austin Canons used to sit, and there is some more glass, as well as the carved panels, in the transepts. These panels, which are late fifteenth century, represent the life of St. Eustace, as is fully described on the printed notices; it would be hard to find better workmanship anywhere, finer costumes or nobler faces.

The glass, too, is of the very best. Look, for instance, at the blue drapery of the Madonna in the Jesse of the north transept, and the purples of the angels in the upper lights of that window. And look at the big window of the choir. In the centre is the sacrifice of Christ; in the north light the story of the Magdalen; Mary at the tomb; Mary washing Christ's feet (a good sixteenth century interior), with Christ at Emmaus, *Mane nobiscum*, and above *Noli me tangere*. In the south light St. John is pictured in glass that is a few years later in date. The church also possesses a lead font which is ascribed to the twelfth century. A few miles after Bourg-Achard, just before the cross-

roads where the Maison-Brûlée stands, is a monument bearing a statue of a soldier of the *garde-mobile*, which was erected to the men who were killed in the Battle of Moulineaux during the Franco-Prussian war. The fighting, named after the village of Moulineaux, took place in December and January, 1870–1. The Prussians, who had occupied Rouen, took possession of the road as far as Pont-Audemer without opposition. A French column, working for the relief of Rouen, drove the Prussians back on to Moulineaux on December 10th. On December 20th the French took La Bouille, Orival, and the Castle of Robert-le-Diable, and then descended upon Moulineaux, as the Prussians retreated upon Grand Couronne.

It was a terrible winter. The country was covered deep with snow, and a bitter frost added to the miseries of warfare. The French, with the carelessness that was so fatal to them all through the war, waited cheerfully for the opportunity of marching on to Rouen. The colonel in particular who was in command at the Maison-Brûlée took no precautions, but gave himself up to drunkenness. The Germans, on the other hand, had carefully entrenched themselves, and waited for the moment to strike. At first their unhappy foes thought they had to deal with a fugitive army: the detachment that had seized Moulineaux marched on to Grand Couronne, thinking that the enemy were in flight. Half a mile before Couronne was an entrenchment—it had been made some time before to prevent the Prussians entering Rouen! When the French reached this, they found it filled with Prussian cannon, and were caught in an unexpected and murderous fire. They retired back upon Moulineaux, leaving many dead behind.

In the evening of January 3rd, when a fine snow was falling through the frosty air, some 8,000 Prussians hurried out of Rouen with 40 cannon. They rested awhile at Grand Couronne, and then, whilst it was still night, threw themselves on the French position. The French troops were entirely surprised; they had rested in a stupid security, and were scattered up and

down the road—incredible as it may seem—as far as Pont-Audemer, while most of the officers, with the best troops, were at Bourg-Achard, instead of at the front by Moulineaux. An insufficient force, badly commanded, had to meet the horrors of a night attack in a forest; the young conscripts, dotted about among the trees in darkness and uncertainty, were easily broken, and the Battle of Moulineaux was lost. An eye-witness has left us an account of the crowd of French citizens who walked out of Rouen until they were stopped by a Prussian outpost before Grand Couronne, and there, in the awful uncertainty of the surrounding thunder, waited six hours in the snow for news of the battle. It came in the form of a procession of carts, some piled up with guns and sabres—trophies, others full of wounded French prisoners. The cry went up, "*Ainsi, toujours, toujours battus!*" and the crowd threw themselves on the carts where their countrymen lay, and covered them with coins and presents. The writer tells us of one young man to whom he gave a handful of silver. "It is useless," the soldier replied; "I have no longer need of anything. Look!" He threw open his cloak, and showed a ghastly wound. Then he gave the civilian his mother's address, and begged him to write to her. Next day the lad died in the Hôtel-Dieu.

The French had hoped that the army at Le Havre (which, as a matter of fact, was paralysed by contradictory orders) would have co-operated with the troops at Moulineaux, and have relieved Rouen, which at the moment of the fight had only 1500 Prussians left in it. But this check was fatal to their plans; the enemy had made good the line of defence which they had thrown across the peninsula from Elbœuf to La Bouille, and the investment of Paris was secure. On January 28th Paris capitulated, on March 1st the preliminaries of peace were signed, but the Germans did not leave Rouen till July 22nd in that disastrous year of 1871.

The Forest of La Londe is none the less green for all the powder that was burnt in it, and that corner of the forest where the Maison Brûlée is situate has long been a favourite resort

of the cheerful citizens of Rouen. It is, indeed, an attractive resting place, and I would recommend a longer stay did I not fear that you will go and spoil the once unsophisticated little inn. The road to Rouen is crossed here by the road from Brionne to La Bouille, which latter place lies at the foot of the beautiful hill and on the banks of the Seine, a grand little village where water parties used to feast in the days of Watteau, as they do in greater number now that the steamers run so frequently from Rouen. The Forest of La Londe lies endlessly around ; other forests, Rouvray and Roumare and Brotonne, are within short reach of the cyclist, who can easily scour the country from Caudebec to Les Andelys, from Bec-Hellouin to beyond Rouen. Furthermore, hidden away at the back of the Maison Brûlée, is one of the sweetest little hamlets in Normandy, and nobody ever sees it.

Having refreshed yourself at one of the cool tables under the trees at Maison-Brûlée, you will soon reach the long "coast" down to Moulineaux. Half way down the hill are more cross roads, and near them is the Château de Robert-le-Diable, which is one of the positions for which the Prussians fought. Duke Robert used to haunt the place under the guise of a gaunt and hoary wolf, and perhaps he roams there still. But it is hidden away in private grounds, and there is not much to see even if you should gain admission ; so you must content yourself with the lovely view from the cross roads of the country at your feet, and then run down the steep remainder of the hill into Moulineaux, where there is a perfect specimen of an Early French village church, with lancet windows and stone vaulting. It contains a panelled flamboyant rood-loft (with classical work on the east side) in excellent condition ; the screen, indeed, is gone, but the mortises into which it fitted remain under the loft. A rich spiral staircase, panelled in the same style, leads to the loft, which is capacious like the staircase. The rood remains intact, with the figures of Mary and John on branches at either side. Opposite to the staircase is an octagonal pulpit in the same style. There is another

typical church near our road, the Chapelle de St. Julien at Le Petit-Quevilly, an industrial suburb of Rouen. It was founded by Henry II. in 1183, and is one of the best examples of a small Norman chapel. On the vault of its apse there are most precious frescoes which belong also to the end of the twelfth century; they represent (E.) the Sleep of the Magi, (S.E.) the

Château near La Bouille.

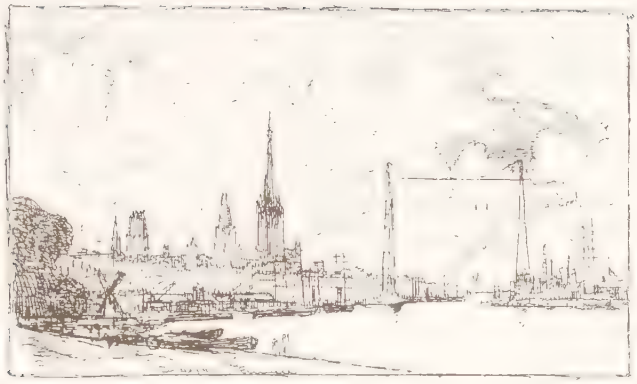
Flight into Egypt, (S.W.) the Baptism of Christ, and other subjects less distinct; chemical analysis has proved that white of egg was used to apply the colours, which are blue, ochre, green, black, white, and the usual reddish-brown. The white-wash, which was laid on when the chapel became a stable at the Revolution, has been but recently removed.

But before Petit-Quevilly and Rouen are reached, you have to pass through Petit-Couronne, where a little to the left of the high road stands the Maison Corneille, an excellent specimen of a small country house of the seventeenth century, with a bakery, and a well, and all its rooms complete. It has a little of the French stiffness (so marked in the modern villas with their fretful ridges), but is charming enough, and nothing could give one a better idea of the life of the time than its pretty rooms, filled as they now are with old furniture, some of which

belonged to Corneille himself, including the very table on which he wrote. For it was here that Pierre Corneille, the great tragedian, spent his boyhood, and here he did most of his work. His father, who was the keeper of woods and forests for the Vicomté of Rouen, had bought the house in 1608; and over the gateway was once a small room whence the elder Corneille could watch the Forest of Rouvray; the loopholes in the walls are said also to have served the same purpose.

A more ideal place for a poet's home could hardly be imagined. On the one side is the forest, a delightful haunt now for the cyclist; on the other is the great river, with hills and more forests beyond, while around is that fair meadow-land which lay mapped out in all its visionary loveliness at your feet as you came down from the Maison Brûlée. Rouen, where Pierre had been educated in the Jesuits' school, was easily reached, though he soon gave up his unwelcome legal practice there; and, indeed, neither the story nor the spires of that romantic town could have had much attraction for the master of classical drama, nor could its gay society have been pleasant to such a shy and awkward man. To the world, he was haughty and sensitive; and yet to the peasants who had been the playfellows of his boyhood, he was always "*le bonhomme Corneille*," the simple country gentleman, who lived here quietly with his brother Thomas, himself also a famous playwright. The two brothers had married two sisters, and the double family seems to have been happy, though Pierre was not of a contented nature, "*Je suis saoul de gloire et affamé d'argent*," he complained, and not without justice, perhaps, for he never received more than two hundred *louis* for a play.

This was one reason why he worked so hard in this undisturbed retirement—too hard in fact. No one could write fifty thousand lines of verse without giving some justification to that criticism of Molière. "My friend Corneille has a familiar who comes now and then, and whispers in his ear the finest verses in the world, but sometimes the familiar deserts him, and then he writes no better than any one else."



The new Rouen.

CHAPTER XI

Rouen

Rouen is rather a museum of antiquities than an ancient city. Really it is a modern manufacturing town, the French Manchester, with just a core of ancient buildings remaining. To see a mediæval town you must go elsewhere in Normandy, to small places like Domfront or Mont-St.-Michel; in Rouen you will only find a few great buildings, a few fast-disappearing streets and picturesque corners here or there, and many tourists wandering through busy crowds that reck little of the past. The buildings that remain are, indeed, of supreme excellence, and travellers in Normandy will always go to see them; but the last half-century has changed the face of Rouen: the pot of iron has smashed the pot of clay. Boulevards, indeed, still preserve the lines of the old walls; but the imperious needs of a big modern centre, together with the passion for straight frontages and the laws of uniformity (that not long ago even enforced the whitening of red bricks) have left little of the venerable city, which was within living memory so rich in houses of the Renaissance, and once contained within its walls and turretted gateways thirty-five parish churches, thirty-four mon-

asteries, a great castle on its higher ground, and a palace with five towers down by the river.

It would be useless to attempt to work through Rouen in any historical order, and it is impossible in this chapter to do more than touch on the places that are to be seen, and a few of the events connected with them. Fortunately, however, those who wish to read the history of the city and to give further study to its monuments, can now provide themselves with the "Story of Rouen," by Mr. Theodore Andrea Cook. I will only say here, by way of introduction, that the fascinating Musée d'Antiquités at the top of the Rue de la République is the proper place from which to commence the study of the town's history; that, and the church of St. Gervais, a brand-new specimen of the fashionable Nightmare-Norman style of architecture, which yet contains, hidden under its pavement, a crypt of the fourth or fifth century. You will have to plunge into the chilly darkness down a flight of steps (and every other step represents a century) till you reach the burying place of St. Mellon, the tiny chapel that is so affecting in its contrast with the soaring triumphs of mediæval Christendom. Round this sacred place there gathered the monastery of St. Gervais, where William the Conqueror was brought out to die.

Old Rouen.

All visitors to Rouen make straight for the Cathedral, but most find themselves under the Grosse-Horloge before they get there. So (since historical order is out of the question for us)

I will first point out this most characteristic feature of the town, and that very briefly. The Grosse-Horloge, part archway, part house, and part clock, is but one member of a charming group which contains, besides the belfry, the curiosity shop and the fountain. It is the centre of the life of old Rouen, and there is nothing anywhere else quite like it even now when most of the old houses have been wantonly swept away. One of those sculptured dwellings has been set up behind the Tour St. André (p. 290) to show us how the tradesmen of the Renaissance could house themselves.

The Grosse-Horloge.

The Grosse Horloge, whose charm you will be sure to appreciate, was built in 1529, but it hides a clock of the fourteenth century, one of the oldest in France. Its gay dial is surrounded by a circle of clouds. Over the arch is the *Agnus Dei*, part of the city arms, and (also with reference to the arms) on the vault a medallion of the Good Shepherd sculptured in high relief, curious in its proportions and attitude, with a pretty setting of landscape and browsing sheep. The belfry, which was built in 1389, once carried a wonderful erection in leaded woodwork, but when this became a source of danger to the inhabitants below, it was replaced by the present humble cupola. The belfry, like that of Evreux (p. 47), was a sign of the

burghers' power; it was rebuilt to replace an older one that was destroyed in 1382 by Charles VI., because one of its bells, La Rouvel, had given the signal for the revolt of the *Harelle*. La Rouvel and its companion, Cache-Ribaud, still hang in the tower that was built for them, and Rouvel (sometimes called Cloche d'Argent) still rings the curfew every evening at nine o'clock.

At the foot of the belfry is the little toy house of three stories that is now used as a curiosity shop. It is the quaintest, prettiest jewel of homely architecture in Rouen, and this corner of the town owes more to it than is generally realised. Next is the fountain, which was set up in the place of an older one by Montmorency, Duke of Luxembourg, in 1728. It represents the story of Arethusa, the nymph who was changed by Artemis into a fountain to save her from the attentions of the river-god Alpheus, who then pursued her into the sea. Alpheus is, of course, the Seine, and Arethusa stands for the fountain—one of the many for which Rouen was famous.

I suppose few people stand before the west front of Rouen Cathedral without some feeling of disappointment. There is, for one thing, hardly room to see it; and then what we do see is so disordered an epitome of all the Gothic styles. The north tower, built soon after 1160, marks the first development of Gothic architecture from the Romanesque; the other was finished as Gothic died in the sixteenth century. The aisle doorways are twelfth century, the four square turrets are thirteenth, the tabernacle work is fourteenth, the rose-window is late fifteenth, the central porch was carved after the Renaissance had dawned in France, and the two pinnacle-shaped buttresses belong to the same period. Last year there were two similar buttresses, made in 1824, blocked out for unachieved carving, and a singular blot on the whole front. Now one of these is being replaced by a less obtrusive buttress, and no doubt the other will soon go. This piece of brand-new work shows how much the old suffers from time, which usually deals so kindly

with ancient buildings; for in truth the stone has weathered badly. Instead of the willow-green colour which tones many an English wall, the stone here looks dirty and dusty – so dusty that the over fine tracery of the gable of the central porch is suggestive of some great cob-web.

Street of the Clock, Rouen.

The Tour de Beurre is famous for its beauty, and also because it is said to have been built from money paid for the leave to use butter in Lent, though in truth the lion's share was contributed by the Archbishop and Chapter. It was begun in 1487 by Pontifz, who twenty years earlier had finished the old north tower, the Tour St. Romain, with a top story and hatchet roof. There was a tradition that under the cathedral was a subterranean lake; and Pontifz was told to build the new tower on piles, which he refused to do, having no faith in

the superstition. When he had laid the foundations, water appeared sure enough, and the wiseacres chuckled ; as he went on, the tower began to lean over, and made cracks by the porch of St. Etienne. But Pontifz, undismayed, patched up the masonry and continued to build. After he had raised the first two stories, Jacques le Roux helped him, and it was Jacques who, after his death, finished off the work with the octagonal lantern in 1507.

When the Tour de Beurre was finished, Jacques, assisted now by his nephew Roland le Roux, put the central part on to the great porch. Desolbeaux carved the Jesse, and with a band of helpers did the rest of the marvellous sculpture. They had not long finished when the Calvinists came to mutilate the statuary.

If we go round now to the south side of the cathedral, and stand in the Place de la Calende, we have before us the best feature of the cathedral, the Portail de la Calende. It was built by Davi in 1280, and its superiority to the later south porch of St. Ouen is obvious. That porch is good, but it has not the sensibility of this. I need not dwell upon its virtues : we travellers give a moment's glance at work that took years of devoted labour, that expresses a whole age with its every day facts and its aspirations for the morrow. In those tiny square panels that cover the lower parts in such profusion are exquisitely carved reliefs which illustrate scenes from the Golden Legend and from the Bible, and give us the ideas of men who, for all their imagination, were keen observers of life and full of humour. The sculptures in the tympanum are easy for any one to understand ; perhaps the noblest of them all is the Descent into Hades.

From here you have a good view of the two western towers, and you will notice that the porch has also two towers all to itself. A little further to the east a noticeable building rests against the church. It is massive and plain in its lower story, but has graceful Early French windows above, in

pairs with a circle in plate-tracery and curious leaves on the mouldings. It is now the vestry, but was once the *chambre du semainier*. The canon in residence was not allowed to quit the sacred building during the week he was on duty; but as there were fifty canons the good man could use this opportunity to make the annual retreat of one week which was incumbent on him. The sober little sacristy further to the east is twelfth century, but its round-headed windows are only about two hundred years old. The Lady Chapel is an excellent specimen of Decorated architecture, and was begun soon after the north porch was finished, in 1307. On its roof stands a leaden statue of our Lady, which is a masterpiece of Nicolas Quesnel, an example of what can be done in that pleasant material, and one of the best works of the sixteenth century. My only regret is that we cannot climb up to see it.

Tour St. Romain.

From here we can see the great central tower, whose huge buttresses show that from the beginning it was intended to carry a great weight. Roland le Roux gave it the top story,

and intended to finish his work with a stone spire. But after twenty years more moderate counsels prevailed, and a wooden spire was built. This spire, one of the finest of its kind, stood till 1822, when it was struck by lightning and burnt. Next year was begun the iron *flèche*, which waited for its completion till 1876, and is one of the greatest trials that the cathedral has to bear.

To get near to the church again, we have to go right round to the north, and through the Portique des Libraries (a bold screen which Pontifz built in 1484) to the Portail des Librairies, which has nearly all the great qualities of its fellow on the south, and is also by Davi. Among its countless carvings may be noticed the very life-like monsters among the small panels, and the Judgment above with its impartial distribution of mitres among the saved and the lost, and its two beautiful groups of angels raising up the holy souls. The court in front of this porch, the Cour des Librairies, was once a busy place, and the arcade on the east side was used by the booksellers of bygone days for the display of their wares.

There is something vastly depressing in the way one is dragged out of quiet places, and paraded round the cathedral. The only remedy is to go in the early morning, when it is being used for purposes of worship. Of course you cannot walk about much at this time—that must be done later under escort—but you can take in the spirit of the place ; you will then see its character before its curiosities, and avoid the pitfall of most visitors, who do not accomplish much beyond the tour of its tombs. In these early hours one can feel the life of the cathedral as it was ages ago, untroubled by modernity ; it is impressive in its unpolished bigness ; it has more surprises, more history, more faults than St. Ouen. You can study in the north aisle the fine blue glass of the Decorated period, you can mark the beauty of the clustered shafts round the piers, especially of those which give lightness even to the huge supports of the central tower. The faults, too, are easy to see—

Portail de la Calende.

the shapeless capitals of the large choir pillars, which have the defects peculiar to the Early French style, and the passage of the lower triforium in the nave, which is carried behind the piers on a clumsy scaffolding of shafts. One of the finest

things in the cathedral, the carving of the misericords, is easily missed, as you have specially to ask for the stalls to be shown. The rest of the woodwork is gone, but the misericords remain to show all the costumes, tools, and trades of the period in which they were carved (1457—69), shepherds with their bagpipes, carpenters, doctors, shoemakers, reapers, and a host of other things, eighty-eight in all. The cloister, too, is not shown. According to Viollet-le-Duc, it is the finest there is with an upper story, but a notice in English tells us that it is "Defence to enter without permission."

I must say something about the two great tombs, although you are certain to have them expounded by the Suisse. You will be first attracted by the tomb of the Cardinals d'Amboise, whose colossal size and infinite detail overwhelm the curious visitor. This tomb is entirely of marble, for what looks like alabaster is really a transparent variety of marble; it had decorations of gold on a blue ground, and its statues were coloured. The statues are admirably carved, from the expressive figures of the little monks to the living portraits of the two cardinals. It was for the great Georges d'Amboise that the monument was made, 1520—5, and no statue of his nephew, the second Georges, appeared till 1541; indeed, the present statue of the nephew seems to have been added some ten years later; for in 1550, on the eve of his death, his vanity induced him to order in his will a new statue, dressed not as archbishop but as cardinal. Roland le Roux was the architect of the monument, and several sculptors worked at the various figures, including Desolbeaux; but it is safer to omit the name of Goujon.

Georges d'Amboise the first is gratefully remembered in Rouen as a wise and splendid benefactor, a sanitary reformer in the matter of the water supply, a builder in the Tour de Beurre, the cathedral façade, and the bishop's palace. But he has a wider fame in history; throughout the reign of Louis XII. he was the true ruler of France, and he governed well. "*Laissez faire à Georges,*" kindly, indolent Louis used to say; and, when

Georges was gone, evil days began for France. There he kneels before us, a man of sterling sense, broad-minded, kind, upright in a crooked age.

Opposite is the tomb of Louis de Brézé, begun some fifteen years later. I do not think there can be a shadow of doubt that it is the finer of the two; and I was hardly surprised to notice the other day that the Century Dictionary has chosen it as an illustration of the word 'renaissance.' Its virile proportions are something quite different to the rather shapeless elaboration of the Cardinals' tomb. Good as its detail is, it never loses the grace of simplicity; and each part is in admirable relationship to the pomp of the equestrian figure. The monument is in black marble and alabaster; its authorship is uncertain, though the names of Jean Goujon, Cousin, and Quesnel are often linked with it. The corpse which lies on the sarcophagus may be by Goujon: at its feet is the figure of the Blessed Virgin, almost hidden behind the columns. Kneeling over its head is the widow, none other than Diane de Poitiers. She it was who set up this monument, the famous widow who consoled herself by becoming the elderly mistress of the Dauphin, mistress indeed of France itself even before the Dauphin became Henri II. Her inscription might be shorter than that of Louis de Brézé: a Latin rhyme summed up the opinion of France—"The people spares Henri," it ran, "but curses Anne; Diane it hates, and yet more the Guises." *Dianam odit.*

The Place de la Haute-Vieille-Tour, a great high-roofed, sober-walled square between the Cathedral and the river, contains a curious monument called the Chapelle de la Fierte St. Romain. This beautifully proportioned little pile of six open stages is a chapel in a very limited sense, as it was built (1543) solely for the annual ceremony of the *Privilège de St. Romain.*

For the origin of this "Privilege," which was quite unique in France and one of the chief glories of Rouen, we must plunge into legend; though it is certain that the story of St. Romain

and the Gargoyle is really the child and not the parent of the Privilege, since the Privilege existed in the twelfth century, and no mention of the Gargoyle can be found till two hundred years later. The Gargoyle was a fearsome dragon who desolated the country during the episcopate of St. Romain, eating several persons every day. At last St. Romain went forth to tackle the monster, taking with him a criminal who had been condemned to death. The Gargoyle became instantly meek when the Bishop conjured it, whereupon he tied his stole round its neck, and bade the criminal lead the beast to Rouen, where advantage was taken of its good nature to push it into the river and so finish its career. The stole and the criminal, by the way, do not come into the story till 1485. Such fables occur in many places: St. Marthe vanquished a dragon called the "Tarasque" at Tarascon, St. Radegonde had her "Grand' Gueule" at Poitiers, St. Loup or St. Vigor went through a similar experience at Bayeux. It is easy to see how they grew up out of metaphor—the monster that St. Romain did effectually destroy in Neustria was paganism; and this tendency was increased by the symbolic use of dragon-standards in processions. We have seen one such at Bayeux, and in our own Salisbury the *draco* was carried round at the same season of the year as the Rouen ceremony. The story of St. Romain is told in the stained glass of the south transept and also of the 10th bay of the south aisle of the Cathedral; at the church of St. Godard, where the saint was formerly buried, it is more clearly given in the last window of the north aisle, where Romain is shown driving the false gods from a heathen temple, stopping the Seine from a threatened inundation, restoring the broken flasks of holy oil, capturing the Gargoyle, and receiving from king Dagobert the charter that gave the Privilege of St. Romain.

This Privilege was that the Chapter of Rouen Cathedral should have power to release a condemned criminal every Ascension Day. They carried it out in the following manner.

The first step was the "insinuation" of the Privilege. Four canons, wearing their surplices and fur almuces, with four chaplains, preceded by a verger in a gown half red and half violet who carried a silver verge, went to the Parlement in the Palais de Justice to proclaim or *insinuer* the right of the

Rouen from Bon Secours.

Chapter. The next step was to search the prisons. This was done on the three Rogation days. As the Rogation procession was going round the city, two canons with two chaplains, a secretary and a verger, dropped solemnly out of the ranks and proceeded to one of the prisons. The gaoler received them in a room prepared with herbs and flowers, where he took oath that all his prisoners were in the gaol; then he departed from the precincts, leaving the clergy alone with the keys. Every cell was then visited; each prisoner was asked the cause of his imprisonment and invited to make depositions; kneeling before a crucifix he swore to tell the truth, and the secretary wrote down his statements, all being under a vow of secrecy. In this way the three mornings were spent, every prison being carefully visited, and after the

morning's work the senior canon entertained his colleague, the chaplains and the secretary at dinner.

Ascension Day was opened with a sermon for the benefit of the people who came from all parts, even from England, to swarm in the narrow streets of Rouen. Meantime the serious business of the day began. The Chapter met at eight o'clock in the chapter-house, and chose the favoured prisoner by vote. His name was written on a paper called the *cartel d'election* and sealed. The Chaplain of St. Romain took the *cartel* off to the Parlement; and the Chapter sat down to a splendid dinner. In the meanwhile the members of the Parlement had been getting to work. Dressed in their red robes, preceded by four ushers in red and one in violet, and escorted by soldiers (in later times the arquebusiers formed one company of the escort) they went to the Salle des Procureurs (now the Salle des Pas-Perdus) in the Palais de Justice. Here the *Messe du Prisonnier* was sung with great pomp, the Archbishop assisting. After Mass, they too sat down to a splendid dinner; it was even more profuse than that of the canons, and was called the *festin du cochon*, after the principal dish. At the well chosen moment when the Daniels of the Parlement had dined, the Chaplain of St. Romain arrived with the *cartel* to ask the consent of the Parlement to the Prisoner's release; he was accompanied by the Provost and four companions of the Confraternity of St. Romain.

Permission having been given, the Prisoner was fetched up, his chains clanking on one leg only. He knelt bareheaded in the gilded room before that august assembly, and then underwent an examination, after which the judges decided that the case was *fiertable*—if it was—for *lèse-majesté* was excluded, and Henri IV. (of all people) added heresy and some other offences to the exceptions. Then the bells of the city rang out joyfully. The happy Prisoner was led to the Maison du Hallage, where he made his confession to the Chaplain, and, if need were, was clad in decent clothes. His pro-

cession then went to the Place de la Haute-Vielle-Tour where it met the ecclesiastical procession at the foot of the Chapelle de la Fierte. Up the steps and on to the platform went the select few, the Prisoner with his chains now wound round one arm, the Archbishop, the celebrant and his assistants, and two chaplains carrying the reliquary, the *châsse de St. Romain*. The prisoner knelt and said the *Confiteor*. Then he took the *châsse* on his shoulders and raised it three times solemnly before the assembled multitude. He was free!

A great shout went up from the people, excited by the long suspense, deeply stirred by pity, and delighted as folk always are delighted when a *deus ex machina* frustrates a far-gone tragedy. And what could be more dramatic than this scene? The murderer snatched from the gallows which very likely he had never deserved, exultant after so near a sight of the bitterest of deaths; the smiling ecclesiastics, happy in their work of mercy, happy too in their triumph, their signal privilege for which they had often fought with judges and with kings; the vast crowd delirious with a touching enthusiasm; above it all the bells clanging out in the bright May sunshine. And how gorgeous was the setting, as the procession started back for the cathedral, along the path that pikes and halberds made for it; first the charity children, then the clergy with the reliquaries and banners of the thirty-two parishes of Rouen; the crosses and incense and torches, and the first processional dragon; the trumpets and *cornets* and *clarions*; the subdeacon and deacon, and the canon who was to sing the great Mass, and the archbishop in his cope and mitre; and then after a little gap the second dragon, which was the popular "gargoyle" and sometimes had a live sucking pig stuck in its awesome jaws (for the people would have their touch of humour); and then the hero of the day, the Prisoner himself, crowned now with flowers and bearing the front part of the shafts on which rested the life-giving reliquary, while the chaplain who alone knew the best and worst of him

carried the shafts behind. What was the prisoner like? We can fancy the curiosity of the crowd. Was he young or old, ugly or handsome, and did he look like a great sinner? Sometimes, it must be confessed, he was an unmitigated scoundrel, but more often his only crime was that he had fought an enemy or rescued a friend.

Such was the ceremony of the Fierte St. Romain. It was held for the last time in 1790; and now the gallows are less hungry than they were, and the law more inexorable.

St. Maclou is certainly the third church in Rouen, and it can well hold its own with the cathedral and St. Ouen in spite of its small size. Original in plan, most prolific in dainty ornament, it is a church at unity with itself; the men who began it in 1434 saw it completed in 1470, and nothing in those years crossed the current of Flamboyance. The spire only is modern (1870), standing in place of one in wood and lead. Round the spire the short nave and choir of three bays each and the shorter transepts are gathered up into innumerable pinnacles and finials. It would be difficult to realise with what intricacy this is effected, were it not for the model which you can see at the Museum. The west front is a triumph of Flamboyant originality; it is convex in plan, a curved range of five great arches with traceried gables; the gabled arches increase in height and width from side to centre, and the whole effect suggests one great spreading porch of five bays, though only the three middle arches have doorways. The finial of the principal gable is carved into a representation of the Holy Trinity. Above it and more conspicuous is the gable cross of the nave, flanked with two curious ornaments, which hold the place so often occupied by St. Mary and St. John. These are the *ampullae* or oil-flasks, in token of the privilege which St. Maclou then enjoyed of supplying the holy oils to all the parishes of the diocese.

As you go in, you are confronted by the famous doors that are (like so much else) attributed to Jean Goujon; excellent

Rouen.

as the carving is in itself, the isolated figures and projecting consoles are rather excessive, considered as parts of a door. Within, there is a faint air of departed luxury ; the gilt rays over the altar, the casing of the choir piers, the rood-beam which is a wooden scroll (not without merits of its own) that dances across the arch,—these of one age ; of another, the two fine columns by Goujon which support the organ, whose case is a master work of Martin Guillebert, and the fairy staircase, spun out of gossamer, which winds up to the organ loft, in acute contrast with the columns that support it ; and of another, the ambitious architecture itself, its high cramped arches, and its still higher lantern that seems to float above the crossing without any visible means of support.

You certainly should not miss walking along by the south side of St. Maclou round through the wonderful squalid old timber houses that lie about the east of the church, till you come to No. 190 in the Rue Martainville through which you will see a doorway with the legend *Cloître Saint Maclou.* Many travellers go away from Rouen without having heard of the Aître Saint-Maclou ; but if you walk in through the door you will be welcomed by the *concierge*, and you will find yourself in one of the most interesting places in the city. It is a gay courtyard, with little children passing here and there, and through the windows more children to be seen sitting in their class-rooms under the care of nuns in white head-gear. These rooms are in the fine timber work gallery that stretches round the court, resting on quaint stone columns. It is a bright scene of young life burgeoning in an old-world garden. But stay a moment, and see what is the carving on those quaint pillars, and on the woodwork above. Skulls and bones and spades on the wood, and on the stone scenes from the Danse Macabre, the triumph of Death. The Aître Saint-Maclou is, in truth, an old cemetery, first opened in the time of the Black Death, and adorned with these morbid imaginings in the years between 1526 and 1533.

The beginnings of the convent of St. Ouen are lost in remoteness, and the present church is the fifth or sixth that has stood on the site. It was begun by a good abbot, Jean Roussel, who was known by the more opulent name of Marc d'Argent, as his tomb in the Lady Chapel still testifies. This devoted man, in spite of his many activities and wide charities, found time, money, and faith to carry on building operations on an immense scale, so that the people wondered and took him for an alchemist ; but the true philosopher's stone which he used, says Pommeraye, was his great economy, rare prudence, the good order which he established, and the help which he secured.

He laid the foundation stone in 1318, and during the next twenty-one years he raised vast sums of money, with which he built the choir and its chapels, the great piers of the crossing, and a good part of the transepts. When he was gone, the work was continued by other abbots all through the fourteenth century. It was not completed till the sixteenth, for a drawing of the date 1525 shows the nave walls still unfinished. Nay, but alas ! even then something remained to be done, and that something was done in the middle of the nineteenth century. The result we see in the present distressing west front with its two distressing spires. The church had till then possessed a particularly graceful and original, though unfinished front, which, had it been completed, would have brought to perfection the bold beauty of St. Ouen. At St. Maclou the usual square plan was varied by a convex front. At St. Ouen it was concave, the two rich towers projecting forward as well as outward, so that the doorways of the aisles faced inwards and the great door lay well back in the centre of that splendid approach. All this was destroyed in order that the Rouennais might be able to boast of that rarest of French curiosities, a great church that was entirely finished. Although they possessed the old drawings for the whole front (which showed two lanterns on its towers like echoes of that which crowns the

church) they actually pulled down the unfinished towers, and built the miserable thing which we now see.

In the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville we can sit comfortably, unharassed by guides, and in nobody's way, to look at the abbey church of St. Ouen. There is a summary of architectural decadence before us. St. Ouen, soaring and stately, is Gothic, French Gothic *in excelsis*. Blocking it is the miserable west front, which is sham Gothic *in infimis*. On its left are the eighteenth century abbey buildings, now the Hôtel de Ville; spacious and severe, they at least command respect. Beyond them is the establishment of the Sapeurs-Pompiers, which is not architecture at all. When we can understand what it is that makes the Hôtel de Ville infinitely superior to the home of the fire brigade, we shall be in a position to appreciate the beauty of Gothic art. Most people (and evidently the maker of the west front of St. Ouen was among them) like Gothic work for the number of its parts, its niches and finials, and pinnacles; the more nearly stone can be made to resemble lace the more ecstatic is their praise. They admire the accidents, and they miss the essential qualities.

If we go along by the north side of St. Ouen, past the remaining side of the cloister that clings to the church for protection, we can enter by the transept door, and get our impression of the great interior bit by bit.

Its unity is what strikes us first and last. We forget that it took so many years in building, that it had many architects, that it covers a momentous change of style. We think of it as a perfect specimen of Flamboyant art, and yet a glance shows us that eastward of the nave it is not Flamboyant at all, but Decorated: the windows of transepts, choir, and Lady Chapel are large and light, with slender mullions that seem to depend upon the iron bars of the glass to keep them up, yet they never with all their airiness lose the geometrical character. But, though the later architects used the free tracery of their age, they all kept to the central idea, and finished the work on

one plan, making it as lofty and as long as possible, with walls of glass. Had the words not sinister associations, we might call it a crystal palace, for there is as little stonework as possible, and as much glass, most of which happily has been preserved. The triforium itself is a glass gallery, with only just enough masonry to lie behind the vaulting shafts, and the graceful arcade that runs along it hardly intercepts the day at all. The Lady Chapel is a globe of light behind the choir.

It is a place to walk about in and mark the grouping of slim piers and the views across vaults and arches, but not to study detail. We notice the rose windows in the transepts, and wish, perhaps, that the northern one knew less of Euclid. We notice how the capital, which is not much of a feature in the choir, lingers only on one shaft of the pier arches in the nave; and we mark the tendency of the lines to run upward without break from floor to ceiling. At the west end we can look at the singular reflection of the interior on the blest water of the stoup; and then we pass out by the south transept into the pleasant abbey garden, now the Jardin de l'Hôtel de Ville. Here we can go round the east end to the back of the Hôtel de Ville, and, sitting there in comfort of fresh greenery, can watch the flying buttresses that gape round the building. No one can say that here the interior effect has been won at the expense of any beauty without. Chapels, each with its own separate roof that does not intercept the light, choir, and central lantern—an octagon dropped upon the square tower—are piled above each other in splendid order, and the stretched quartrefoils of the lower parapet give just that touch of license which at St. Ouen is but the freedom of artists who knew the value of law.

From St. Ouen it is natural to walk up the dirty and delightful Rue Eau de Robec, lined with old houses and threaded by the little river Robec, to St. Vivien, a Decorated church, almost square in plan with its four aisles, and adorned with a dumpy spire. Coming back to St. Ouen you can easily find

St. Laurent in the Rue Thiers. At least, I do not know if you will find it there next year. In 1898 there was a notice up that its restoration was to be the subject of a competition among aspiring architects. This year, however, it is still unscathed. Desecrated, indeed, St. Laurent has been since the Revolution. Dwelling places have been worked into it in the oddest way; there is a gallery stuck over the western porch, and in the south porch a woman is busy dusting various pieces of furniture, for on this side a shop still flourishes. A very little clearance would make it fit for worship, but I suppose we dare not hope for such gentle treatment. The nave is late fourteenth century work, and the aisles about a century later; but the tower, which was finished in 1502, is St. Laurent's best feature. It is bold and a little coarse, with big statues, heavy tracery, and a top story that seems to be made up of flying buttresses. Once it had a stone spire.

During the revolt of the *Nu-pieds* (p. 165) a farmer of taxes, named Le Tellier de Tourneville, owed his life to St. Laurent's tower. The good man had become rich in a mysterious way, and furthermore the *gabelle* was not popular, to put it mildly; wherefore he was besieged in his house for three whole days. A shot from one of his windows killed the child of a town-guard in the arms of its father, which so enraged the crowd that some climbed on to the roof of St. Marie-la-Petite and showered stones upon Tourneville's home, others set fire to the wood work, others broke in the door. The last moments of the unhappy publican seemed to have arrived, when he disguised himself by the removal of his beard and escaped to the church of St. Laurent. Even here he was followed; he was not safe till he had climbed to the top of the tower, and there hidden himself. His friends managed afterwards to smuggle him out of indignant Rouen.

Another remarkable evasion is associated with this church. For it was here that was celebrated the solemn funeral of Postel des Minières, a *conseiller au Parlement*, who, so far from

being dead, was using the diversion of his funeral to escape out of France.

St. Vincent is mostly famous for its glass, which, in my opinion, is better than the other well-known glass of St. Patrice and St. Godard. The nave seems to have been finished in 1471; the choir, with its stilted arches, and high, open triforium and clerestory, was finished in 1530, but was transmogrified with exuberant gilt plaster-work in 1740. The nave, which seems to be somewhat earlier, is short, and has four aisles. In the south porch (1515) little pagan cupids peep from the heads of Gothic niches. The western porch, boldly projecting, is a good feature, though time has dealt unkindly with it. At the south-east angle of the church is the well-known figure of the salt-porter, who stands there because the church of St. Vincent had certain rights in the salt trade. Besides its glass, St. Vincent contains some excellent carved panelling (c. 1530) in the southern chapel, and in the sacristry some well known tapestries of the sixteenth century and some rich vestments of the eighteenth.

The glass is best seen rather late in the afternoon. We must run through it very briefly:—South choir aisle: 1. A Triumph: (*a*) Adam and Eve in a forest, riding on a chariot drawn by Faith and Fortitude, before them a lion and other beasts, behind them Temperance, Charity, Hope, Prudence; (*b*) On a chariot, the Tree with the Serpent: in front, Adam and Eve bound, in the company of *Labor* and *Dolor*; behind, a gorgeous figure carries the banner of Credulity, and next are the Seven Deadly Sins; in the background is a view of Rouen: (*c*) Our Lady (or Holy Church) on a chariot with David and Isaiah, preceded by angels and a figure in red carrying a sword, and followed by an interesting procession of Rouen burghers. 2. St. Anne, birth of the Virgin. 3. The three Maries. 4. St. Vincent. 5, 6, 7 and 8. (Behind the choir). Scenes from the Life of Christ. 9. St. Antony of Padua: the most interesting part, which represented the ass kneeling to the Blessed Sacrament,

was destroyed in May, 1899, but is to be repieced, I believe. North choir aisle: 10. In a lancet, the *Dons de la Miséricorde*, by the Le Prince, artists of the Beauvais School (c. 1530). 11, 12 and 13. St. Nicholas and others, St. Peter, and the Baptist (note Salome's gorgeous dress). Over the north porch: Instruments of the Passion; above, a Jesse. West end: The Judgment (note the blue dress of the Virgin).

Near St. Vincent is the Tour St. André. The beautiful church to which it belonged was destroyed lest it should mar the mathematical precision of the Rue Jeanne d'Arc. What, I wonder, would Jeanne herself have thought of such an act? A century earlier, in 1741, the stone spire was demolished, "*vu la vétusté, la caducité et l'inutilité de cette partie de l'édifice.*" Characteristic reasons! What remains is interesting as an example of the lingering Gothic tradition, for it was built as late as 1541–6. The old house with the pyramidally arranged windows which stands near the tower is one of the many which made the Rue de la Grosse Horloge beautiful before the improvements of 1861, when it was set up in this little square.

In the Place de la Pucelle is the Hôtel Bourgtheroulde, which stands alone in France for the magnificence of its decoration. The exterior is practically destroyed, for all its best features are gone; but the interior buildings of the courtyard remain, and the two wings with their beautiful corner tower give us an idea of what the place was like when it was finished in 1532. It is, however, for its sculptured walls that the Hôtel is most famous. On the left are two ranges of carved panels above and below the windows, while the high building in front is covered with sculpture. Decayed as they are, enough can still be seen to show their priceless value. The lower range on the left is the most precious of all, because it is a contemporary representation of the Field of the Cloth of Gold. In the middle panel the meeting of François I. with Henry VIII. can be made out pretty well, and the luxuriant feathers that decorate both horses and hats give us some idea of the magnificence

which was once faithfully reproduced on this crumbling stone. Cardinal Wolsey is among the suite on the one side, and the Legate rides with other cardinals behind the French king.

Above the windows is a series the meaning of which was for long unknown; but in 1875 M. Palustre found, by the aid of a glass, the words *Fama Vincit Mortem* on the fourth panel. He then traced on the next the words *Tempus Vincit* . . . This put the subject beyond dispute: it was the famous allegory of Petrarch, which (as we have already seen at Caen) had such a hold on the imagination of men at a time when "*les idées alambiquées*" were in vogue. The weavers of Arras had scattered representations of the Triumphs of Petrarch all over Europe, and the sculptor here has sacrified his own initiative to the desires of his patron, and contented himself with translating into stone the tapestries of Arras.

Although the two first of the series are gone, it will be worth while to recall their subjects. The first was *Amor Vincit Mundum*, and the next *Pudicitia Vincit Amorem*. Next comes Death, *Mors Vincit Pudicitiam*. Then the conquests of Fame (a woman blowing a trumpet) over Death, and Time over Fame, *Fama Vincit Mortem*, *Tempus Vincit Famam*, and the series is finished over the doorway by religion, *Divinitas seu Eternitas omnia Vincit*, the Persons of the Trinity on a car drawn by the four creatures symbolic of the Evangelists.

The carvings which cover the main building are in far better preservation, and their style is entirely different. They are, indeed, treated like pictures, in a curious flat relief, or still more like tapestries, from which they are in all probability copied. I have not room to describe their very quaint subjects in detail, and must refer you to Mr. Cook's book or to M. Palustre for such description, contenting myself here with a bare list:—1 (By the door) Reaping and swimming; 2 Love-making, *Berger à bergère promptement se ingère;* 3 Game of *main chaude* or hot cockles; 4 (July) Fishermen, a knight carried off by a griffin in the background; 5 (June) Sheep-

shearing, Dog dancing to a pipe, Wolf carrying off a lamb; 6 (August?) A Feast, bag-pipes are being played.

Apart from its intrinsic beauty, the Bureau des Finances (in the Place Notre-Dame) is of remarkable interest as being by the same architect as the Palais de Justice. That is entirely Gothic, this is Renaissance; we have passed suddenly over the great change. Yet both buildings are by Roland Le Roux, and both were built at the order of Louis XII.

In 1827 the Bureau was given up to the shopkeeper, and since he has had it the lower story has been treated in an incredible fashion. One would imagine that no decent person would pass by these shops without indignation, that every one would avoid patronising them. Yet their owners seem to have found that the more completely they hide the exquisite stonework with their clumsy boards and glaring letters the more the public deals with them. The proportions of this noble building are destroyed, its whole effect is ruined. We can only try and imagine the lower story since we cannot see it—its seven arches, with their pilasters covered with grotesques and their sculptured medallions. About the wreckage runs the little intermediate story, or *entresol*, exceedingly original, full of elegance, especially in the lovely medallions, two and a half of which, with their supporting cupids, are still unhidden. This *entresol*, at the same time, is gravely utilitarian, for the tiny rooms, which are lighted by its low oblong windows, were required for office work, while board meetings were held in the great high-windowed room of the first-floor. A most gorgeously-carved frieze finishes the whole.

Another administrative office of the sixteenth century, the Cour des Comptes, has lately fared even worse. It is now entirely engulfed in the huge buildings of the *Mutuelle Vie*, which seem to have been specially designed to dwarf the unfortunate cathedral. Inside the great block, the two sides of the beautiful courtyard can still be seen, and the skin of the chapel vault forms a lining to one of the new halls. They have

built round it cleverly enough, and what is there will be preserved from further ravages, but of course the charm of the old place is gone.

Street in Rouen.

The Chambre des Comptes with its two presidents, ten masters, eight auditors, and other legal and financial officials worked here for long days mitigated by many holidays. Mass was said in the little chapel at 5.30 in summer and an hour later in winter; from 7 or 8 in the morning till 5 in the evening business was transacted. The vacations seem to have been on the same admirable system as that still in vogue at our universities, that of equal division. Furthermore, there were two days off every week, not to mention the holidays. The Chamber was suppressed and revived several times between 1580, when it was installed here, and 1790, when it sank with the rest in the deep waters of the Revolution, leaving this house for bubble.

Near the Grosse Horloge is the Palais de Justice, reputed one of the finest public buildings in Europe. It was built between 1499 and 1514 by Roland le Roux and Roger Ango, with the exception of the façade in the Rue Jeanne d'Arc (1889) and the east wing, a stupid copy of the western one that was set up in 1842 in the place of a classical addition of the time of Louis XIV. Roland's work is a good deal spoilt by these and other alterations; still it must always have lacked the majesty of the Northern town halls. Its qualities lie rather in the elaboration of its detail, the fretted dormers, the pinnacles, statues, and crested roof, and the beautiful turret that breaks the line of the middle building. You can walk freely into the great hall which occupies the west wing, and is now the Salle des Pas-Perdus, a noble room, filled with soft light; there is a gallery at either end, and under the north gallery the marble table that was used as a tribunal. One of the officials will conduct you hence to the Cour des Assises, which is famous for its elaborate roof, though perhaps you may prefer to it the plainer one that sweeps across the Salle des Pas-Perdus.

Rouen has many claims upon the historian which I must omit, but one cannot be passed over. It is the town where Jeanne d'Arc was tried and executed. Her statue is in all the shop windows, a fanciful image indeed, quite unlike the real Jeanne whose rustic countenance, black hair (which she cut short), and strongly-built frame of moderate stature, no one but Bastien-Lepage has tried to reproduce. Her principal monument is the tower where she was examined.

This Tour Jeanne d'Arc is really the keep of the castle which fills so large a part in the annals of Rouen. It is a round tower of the type which we have learnt to associate with Philippe-Auguste, and was in fact built by him in 1205. In the reign of Henri IV. Rouen Castle became a quarry and began to disappear. In 1683 the nuns of the Saint Sacrement bought the mansion that had taken the castle's place, and became the proprietors of the keep also. A century later, to wit

on the 3rd Messidor of the year IV., the *ci-devant* convent passed into private hands, and became a home of cotton-spinning. But the factory did not flourish, and in 1809 the convent buildings again passed into religious keeping, this time the Ursulines buying it for a girls' school. These good women at once proceeded to demolish the neighbouring Tour de la Pucelle, where the Maid had been imprisoned, in order to make for themselves a garden. In 1840, the ruined keep having taken to dropping loose stones upon their pupils' heads, the Ursulines decided to destroy it also. But even in the forties there were limits. France awoke, and the tower was saved. The preservation took some time. First public opinion was excited, then the ground was bought, then the restoration was carried out in stages, interrupted by want of funds and by the Prussian war; the tower did not emerge from the hands of its foster-builders till some years after the invaders had gone. The upper part has been rebuilt, and M. Viollet-le-Duc has placed on it the conical roof and the wooden hoards which were an indispensable defensive feature of medieval fortification (ch. 1), so that now we are able to see what a tower looked like in time of war before the introduction of artillery. It is a particularly interesting restoration, since the old hoards have everywhere disappeared, not only because of their perishable nature, but because when cannon came into use the tops of the towers were converted into platforms, as we know was the case here.

You can go into the vaulted room of the Tour Jeanne d'Arc, the very room where she stood up before the judges, who had brought her here face to face with their instruments of torture, in the hope that she might thereby be brought to falter in her story. Nearly all the other buildings connected with the Maid are now destroyed, and this room remains the one place where the sound of her voice was certainly heard.

It was on the 9th of May, 1431, that Jeanne was brought before her judges here. There were eleven ecclesiastics, all

Frenchmen, headed by Pierre Cauchon, the infamous Bishop of Beauvais, together with some English soldiers, the executioner and his machines.

"The said Jeanne was required to tell the truth concerning many and different points contained in her trial, which she had denied elsewhere, and about which she had replied in an erroneous manner," so runs the Latin report of this inquiry. "If she did not confess the truth she would be put to the torture, the instruments of which were shown her, arranged as they were in the said tower. There also were the officers who, by our order, were ready to put her to this torture, to force her to come back into the paths of truth, and to recognise it, in order that by this means the safety of her body and of her soul might be assured, which by her false inventions she was exposing to grave danger." Considerate judges!

Jeanne's reply is fortunately preserved in the old French of the time. Its defiance is so simple and honest that it gives one a sublimer idea perhaps than anything else of her courage. She was alone and broken, expecting every moment to be in agony. She had sacrificed herself for country and religion, yet it was Frenchmen and ecclesiastics who were judging her; so her task was twice as hard as that of a martyr defying the foes of his faith. And worst of all, perhaps, her sanity was called in question. She heard voices. Was she mad? Surely no girl was ever so overwhelmed with temptation to give way. Yet her answer is quiet; she is quite modest in her courage, she does not over-rate her own strength, but speaks with most perfect sanity.

"Vraiement, se vous me deviez faire détraire les membres et faire partir l'âme hors du corps, si ne vous diray-je autre chose; et se aucune chose vous en disoye je, après si diroye-je tousjours que vous le me auriés fait dire par force."

"Truly, though you should destroy my limbs, and make my soul go forth from my body, I shall not say to you aught else; and if I should say to you any such thing, I should

always say afterwards that you had made me say it by force."

Then she replied to the questions about the heavenly messages she had heard, rebutting the charges of having been led by the devil, in this fashion, "*Item*, dit qu'elle sçait bien que nostre Seigneur a esté toujours maistre de ses fais, et que l'ennemy n'avait oncques eu puissance sur ses fais."

The executioner who was present described the interrogation twenty-four years after, when the solemn "Rehabilitation" took place; his evidence is preserved in the Latin text of that strange posthumous trial.

"He deposes that he knew the same Jeanne at the time when she was brought into the town of Rouen, where he saw her in the Castle of Rouen, when witness and his colleague were summoned to put the same Jeanne to the torture. And thereupon a sort of examination was commenced. She showed much prudence in her replies, so much so that those present were astonished. At last witness and his colleague retired without touching her person."

It is with a sensation of physical relief that we learn that her wise answers saved her from the torture.

Let us now go to the last scene of all, the place of Jeanne's martyrdom. Until lately the burning was supposed to have taken place in the Place de la Pucelle, where a memorial of her stands; she is represented as Bellona, in the taste of the eighteenth century, and the monument was spared at the Revolution because the Maid had belonged to the Tiers Etat! It was thought that the Vieux Marché had once been much larger than now, and had included the Place de la Pucelle, but M. Charles Robillard de Beaurepaire has proved that the Marché was smaller and not larger than it is now, and that Jeanne was burnt in the midst of it. It is in the Place du Vieux Marché, then, that the shameful tragedy took place.

I think it will be most useful if I bring before you some extracts from the vivid evidence which was given at the *Procès de Rehabilitation* and let the eye-witnesses speak for themselves.

The first evidence is that of Brother Jehan Toutmouillé:—

"Et quant il [Frère Martin] annonça à la pouvre femme la mort de quoy elle devoit mourir ce jour là, que ainsi ses juges le avoient ordonné et entendu, et oy la dure et cruelle mort qui lui estoit prouchaine, commença à s'escrier doloreusement et piteusement, se destraire et arracher les cheveulx: 'Hélas! me traite-l'en ainsi horriblement et cruellement, qu'il faille (que) mon cors net et entier, qui ne fut jamais corrompu, soit aujourd'hui consumé et rendu en cendres! Ha! a! j'aymeroie mieulx estre descapitée sept fois, que d'estre ainsi bruslée.'"

Evidence of Jean Massieu, priest, who, with Brother Martin Ladvenu, attended her on the scaffold:—

"Et ell estant au Vieil-Marché . . . èsquelles dévocions, lamentacions et vraie confession de la foy, en requérant aussi à toutes manières de gens de quelques condicions ou estat qu'ilz feussent, tant de son party que d'autre, mercy très-humblement, en requérant qu'ilz voulsissent prier pour elle, en leur pardonnant le mal qu'ilz lui avoient fait, elle persévéra et continua très-longue espace de temps, comme d'une demye heure, et jusques à la fin. Dont les juges assistans, et mesme plusieurs Anglois furent provoqués à grandes larmes et pleurs, et de faict très amèrement en pleurèrent; et aucuns et plusieurs d'iceulx-mesmes Anglois, recongnurent et confessèrent le nom de Dieu, voyant si notable fin, et estoient joyeulx d'avoir esté à la fin, disans que ce avoit esté une bonne femme. Et quant elle fut délaissée par l'Eglise, celluy qui parle [the witness] estoit encore avec elle; et à grande dévocion demanda à avoir la croix: et ce oyant un Anglois qui estoit là présent, en feit une petite de boys du bout d'un baston qu'il lui bailla; et dévotement la

receut et la baisa, en faisant piteuses lamentacions et recognicions à Dieu nostre rédempteur qui avoit souffert en la croix pour nostre rédempcion ; de laquelle croix elle avoit le signe et répresentacion, et mit icelle croix en son sain, entre sa chair et ses vestemens. Et oultre demanda humblement à cellui qui parle, qu'il lui feist avoir la croix de l'église, afin que continuellement elle la puist veoir jusques à la mort. . . .

"Et ainsi fut menée et atachée, et en continuant les louanges et lamentacions dévotes envers Dieu et ses Saincts, dès le derrain mot, en trespassant, cria à haulte voix : 'Jhésus'!"

Evidence of Frère Isambert de la Pierre :—

"Dit oultre plus, que la piteuse femme lui demanda, requist et supplia humblement, ainsi qu'il estoit près d'elle en sa fin, qu'il allast en l'eglise prouchaine, et qu'il apportast la croix, pour la tenir elevée tout droit devant ses yeux jusques au pas de la mort, afin que la croix où Dieu pendist, fust en sa vie continuellement devant sa vue. Dit oultre, qu'elle estant dedans la flambe, oncques ne cessa jusques en la fin de résonner et confesser à haulte voix le saint nom de Jhesus, en implorant et invoquant sans cesse l'ayde des Saincts et Sainctes de paradis : et encores, qui plus est, en rendant son esperit et inclinant la teste, proféra le nom de Jhesus, en signe qu'elle estoit fervente en la foy de Dieu, ainsi comme nous lisons de Saint Ignatius et plusieurs autres martyrs.

"*Item.*—Dit et dépose que, incontinent après l'execucion, le bourreau vint à lui et à son compaignon, frère Martin Ladvenu frappé et esmeu d'une merveilleuse repentance et terrible contricion, comme tout désespéré, craingnant de non savoir jamais impétru pardon et indulgence envers Dieu, de ce qu'il avoit faict à ceste saincte femme."

The executioner also said that, in spite of the oil and sulphur and fuel he had heaped around her body, her heart remained unburnt as by a miracle.

One witness, a priest who had acted as notary at the trial,

after relating how "*juges, prélats et tous les autres assistans furent provoqués à grans pleurs et larmes*" at the sight of her execution, stated that he himself had never wept so much for anything before, "*et que par ung mois après ne s'en pouvoit bonnement appaiser.*" With some of the money that was paid him for his work at the trial he bought a little missal, which he still kept, in order that he might have a memorial of her and might pray for her to God. Again in the Latin part of the evidence we are told of a canon who wept marvellously and cried, "*Utinam anima mea esset in loco in quo credo animam istius mulieris!*"

So she died on this spot, simple and brave, a heroic saint, and yet with her full share of human, womanly sensitiveness. Surely no woman ever accomplished so much or suffered such an ordeal. Her honest wisdom had baffled her tormentors; and her death began that gradual process of conversion which, after centuries had passed, won every human being of whatever country to the side of the girl to save whom not a solitary hand had been raised.

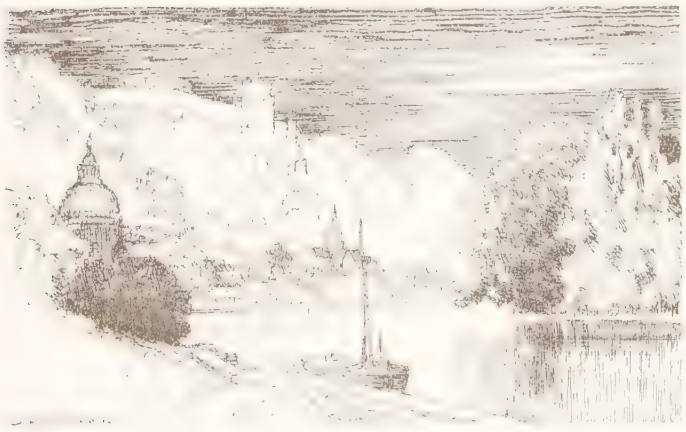
"We are lost!" the English are said to have cried as they saw her die; "we have burned a saint." And certainly from that moment the English never again knew prosperity in France. They were, as she had prophesied, soon all thrust out of France, except those who left their bones there. Cauchon, the Bishop of Beauvais, who had contrived her death, was suddenly carried off in the height of the ambition for which he had sold his soul. Such things were regarded as miracles, but the greatest wonder of all was the change that came over Charles VII. some eight years after her death. He, whose disgraceful betrayal of her was the prime cause of her martyrdom, threw off his indifference, and, with a courage and determination that he had never shown sign of before, accomplished the work which she had begun.

She embodied the two greatest passions that have moved mankind, religion and patriotism, and therefore her memory

has gradually conquered the hearts of men. The Church that condemned has now beatified her, and the nation that betrayed has made her its heroine. Nor are we English, who bear so large a share of the infamy, behindhand in our love for

"Jehanne, la bonne Lorraine
Que Angloys bruslèrent à Rouen."

It is perhaps not the least of her miracles that every Englishman who reads her story finds himself on her side and against the men of his own country.



The Seine below Rouen.

CHAPTER XII

ROUEN TO LE HAVRE. ST. GEORGES DE BOSCHERVILLE, DUCLAIR, JUMIÈGES, ST. WANDRILLE, CAUDEBEC, LILLEBONNE, TANCARVILLE, HARFLEUR, GRAVILLE.

CERTAINLY, if I had only a few days to spare in Normandy I should spend them between Rouen and Le Havre. For not only is this tract of country famous for "scenery" which even artists admire, but it is rich also in remarkable monuments, so that with slight digressions the traveller along the highway to Le Havre can see what are perhaps the finest specimens in Normandy of a complete Romanesque church (at Boscherville), of a ruined one (at Jumièges), of a jewel of late Gothic set in the loveliest little old town (Caudebec), as well as the unique Roman theatre at Lillebonne, the cloister of St. Wandrille, and the castle at Tancarville, not to mention Harfleur and Graville, and Le Havre itself. This is a good list for a road that is but little longer than that between Brighton and London, just 66 miles, including the digressions. But if there were nothing at all of historical interest, if the Romans had never made their way from Rouen to Harfleur, and if the

Norman pirates had never swarmed up the tempting waters of the Seine, it would still be infinitely worth while to follow the course of the great river that winds so finely between hills and forests and orchards and meadows. It is very usual to ride the distance in two days, staying at Caudebec for the night, and it is quite easy to see a good deal of the principal places in this way ; for from Rouen to Caudebec is but 29 miles, and from Caudebec to Le Havre 37. Still, it is a pity not to stay for some time in this district of the lower Seine. Caudebec is an obvious centre for walks and rides, just as La Bouille is on the other route (p. 264), but the less frequented places will be for many even pleasanter for a stay : one can always get decent accommodation and food in France, and the numerous ferries (clearly marked in Joanne's map) throw the whole country on both sides of the river open to the cyclist.

One soon gets out of Rouen by the west side on to the extremely high hill that leads to Canteleu. Near the top, labour brings its usual reward in the form of a view. Rouen, as it is to-day, lies spread out before the heated traveller, the Rouen whose tall factory chimneys form a considerable part of the "*front hérissé de flèches et d'aiguilles*," which, in Victor Hugo's well-known lines,

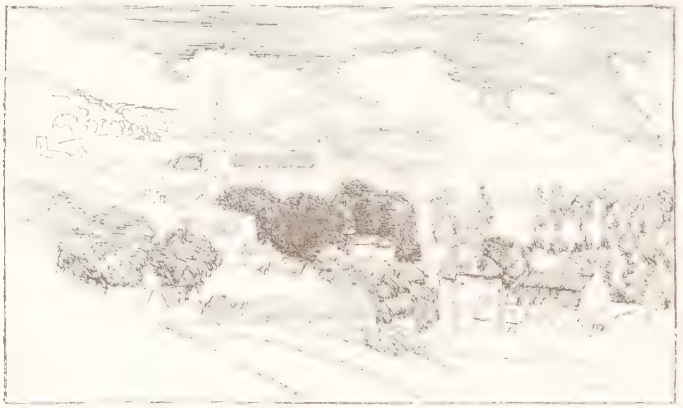
"*Déchire incessament les brumes de la mer.*"

From Canteleu the road cuts straight across the first great bend of the Seine, through the Forêt de Roumare, where the bracken shows its bright green far into the depths of the pine forest, and then drops down again towards the Seine on the other side of the hill.

Half-way down the hill we get our first sight of the abbey church of St. Georges de Boscherville. Its towers and apses lie below us, and we can see that we are in the presence of an unusually large and complete building ; but when we reach the bottom of the hill and turn off into the village of Saint-Martin-de-Boscherville, of which St. Georges is now the parish church,

we shall realise that it is one of the least altered and most perfect examples of Norman work in France.

The abbey was founded by Raoul de Tancarville, who was Chamberlain to William the Conqueror, and this church was begun by him about the time of the Norman conquest. There seems never to have been more than ten monks here; at the



The Abbey of St. Georges de Boscherville.

Revolution there were seven, and they had no money because of their great almsgiving. Like many other old places, it has its romance. A lady was in love with a knight, but was married against her will to the lord of Bardouville, a village which still has its castle and is on the opposite side of the river. The knight thereupon buried his sorrows in the cloister, becoming a monk of St. Georges, so that he could still breathe the same air as his lost mistress. After a while he became abbot, and this brought him into relations with the great folk of the neighbourhood; and meeting the lady of Bardouville once more, his old passion took hold of him. Every night, like another Leander, he swam across the river, guided only by the lamp at his Hero's casement, till at last the lord of Bardouville surprised them together and slew the abbot-lover.

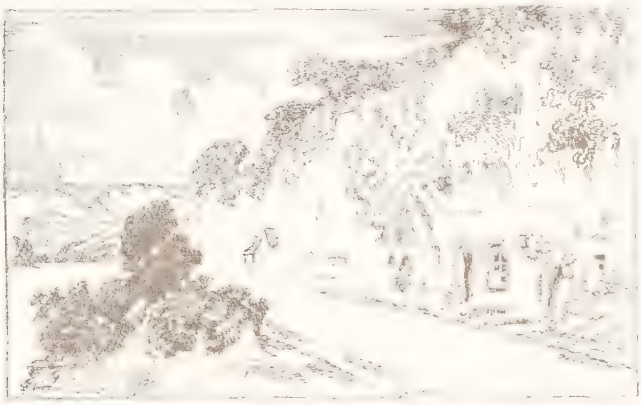
St. Georges seems to be later than Jumièges, but it has the advantage of being unruined as well as unaltered: with the exception of its thirteenth-century turrets, it is entirely Romanesque. We enter through a sculptured doorway of unusually refined workmanship, to find an interior agreeably free from modern attempts at embellishment, and whitened in every part. I believe many people complain of this white surface, because the notion that whitewash was invented by the Puritans for purposes of defacement is not yet dead. As a matter of fact, though medieval architects often coloured their walls, they also often whitewashed them; and the artistic value of such plain surfaces is very great indeed. How it enables one to appreciate here the noble qualities of the architecture! How well the coloured Madonna over the south door tells against its generous background! And if the high altar is repellent, that is the fault of modern French taste, which seeks only for a certain frigid ostentation, and has given this quality to an altar which is supposed to be copied from the well-known one at St. Germer, near Beauvais.

The vaults in the aisles and choir are groined in the Norman style, but without ribs; in the apse ribs first appear in a clumsy and tentative fashion. Many of the capitals are like those at Graville, which we shall see a little later, especially those with horse's heads. There is a great gallery in each transept, like that in Winchester Cathedral; on the south one are carved two knights in Norman helmets tilting at each other (which again reminds one of Graville); on the north the large spreading cap is ornamented with a rough, boyish carving of a horseman, and over it is a primitive bishop. Under each of these galleries is a chapel with an apse, so that, with the aisles and choir, there are five round apses altogether. A very fine cable forms the string course round the church.

The rest of the abbey buildings are all gone, except the chapter-house and a few fragments of the cloister, which stand in the apple orchard on the north of the church. The chapter-

house is a very good example of Transitional work (1211), and its carving is exceptional in fineness and design; on the caps can be traced the Sacrifice of Isaac and the Passage of Jordan. The vaulted ceiling retains a painted pattern of small red discs which is most effective.

The road from Boscherville strikes the Seine at a point



Cliff dwellings on the Seine, near Duclair.

where it looks like a lake for its amplitude. And here is one of those iron structures, half lamp-post, half lighthouse, which now make the river navigable by night as well as by day. The steamers pass up from the southward reach that lies beyond Duclair, and turn again southward at this corner towards where the hills are gathered up behind La Bouille. Sometimes a vessel glides past with the red ensign of England, and once I heard a workman shout *Vive la Russie* at the sight of a flag that is more popular in France than ours. For here in the depths of the country we are to all intents and purposes on the high seas. Duclair itself, with its old-fashioned looking quay along the river does a considerable trade in farm produce with England, although one may often pass through it without taking it for more than a sleepy waterside village. One of the

Ferry at Duclair.

many curious rocks near it is called the *chaire* or *chaise de Gargantua*, a legendary name which is found in a charter of the eleventh century—*Curia Gigantis*. The giant has another seat at Tancarville.

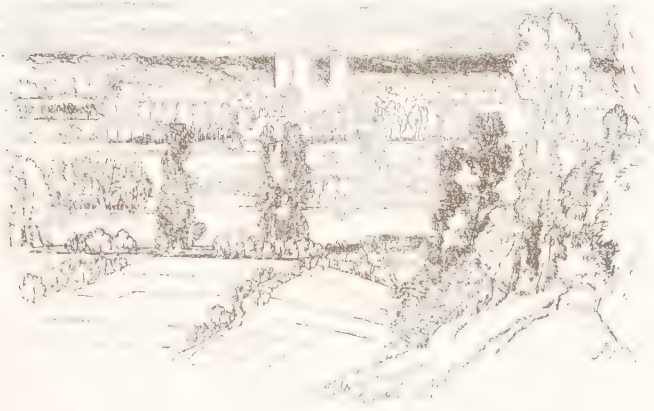
In order to reach Jumièges you must keep to the highway on leaving Duclair, and avoid the tempting road on the left hand that follows the course of the river ; for this road leads to Le Mesnil-sous-Jumièges, which is quite a long way from Jumièges itself, and your attempts to reach the right place may land you after many miles into aimless field paths, as once happened to me ; so you must take the main road out of Duclair, in spite of the finger-post only promising Yainville and Le Trait. On this road you keep till you have passed the fourth *kilomètre* stone and seven small *hectomètre* stones after it, and then (how beautiful is the decimal system !) just

when you have travelled 4,700 yards from Duclair, a small road on the left turns off to the low Norman tower of Yainville whence you bear to the left and reach Jumièges along a straight road of two miles.

St. Philibert having been led by the teaching of St. Ouen to abandon the world, founded the monastery of Jumièges in the middle of the seventh century. The second Clovis was king, and chaos was supreme in those days. The disordered brutality of the age is shown by the story of the *Enervés de Jumièges*, whose tomb (some six hundred years later in date) is still shown in the little museum; they were, the legendary history relates, two sons of Clovis who revolted, and for punishment were hamstrung, the "nerves" of their legs being cut. Thrown into a boat to drift on the Seine, they were taken in by the kindly monks, but soon died of their injuries. Philibert, like so many of the earlier cenobites, did much to temper the violence of the world. He established in the forest of Jumièges, which the Queen gave him, a peaceful colony of monks, who drained the morasses, cleared away the rocks, and by industry, peace, and justice, transformed the wilderness into a garden. Nor was he content with the happiness which he had created for his own flock, he went boldly to the Court to bring home to Ebroin, the Mayor of the Palace, his many acts of injustice. This drew on him the vengeance of that cruel minister, who drove him from Jumièges; but, undismayed, he founded other convents in Poitou, in one of which, Nermoutiers, he eventually died. So well had he done his work at Jumièges that by the end of the century there were, it is said, no less than 900 monks in the abbey.

Before long the Normans overran the land, and devastated this oasis of peace. The community was scattered, and only two monks were left: but these were destined to be the source of new life. For William Longsword (Rollo's son) chanced upon them one day when he was hunting; and, being touched at their condition, he took them back to their old home, and

in 930 began to rebuild it for them. We are still able to see a precious relic of this early church, although the greater ruins are the work of Robert of Jumièges, who was abbot here till, in 1051, he was made Archbishop of Canterbury. His name in English history recalls the rule of foreign favourites under



Edward the Confessor, the rise of England against them when, a year after his appointment, Robert cut his way through the streets of London with the sword and fled back to Normandy, and the complications which followed when Stigand became a rival Archbishop of Canterbury; it was by these troubles that the way was prepared for the failure of Harold's government and the triumph of another Norman foreigner, William the Conqueror. But in France the name of Robert will always be connected with the church that was the glory of one of its greatest and most learned abbeys.

Robert's church was consecrated the year after the Norman conquest, and so these ruins have quite a special interest apart from the grandeur of their colossal towers, apart from all the beauty which impresses every traveller. To see the kind of edifices which we can associate with the Conqueror, and which

show how much Normans were in advance of Saxons, we must go, not to Caen or to Falaise, but to Jumièges and to Arques.

From the west front to the central tower, then, we have a magnificent example of early Norman work. The plain, large porch forms a projection on the front, and is continued within by a kind of narthex, over which is a gallery called the Salle des Dames. The capitals of the nave have the rude Ionic volutes of the eleventh century, and on some are traces of colour; for the men of the twelfth century found these early caps too plain for their taste, and covered them with plaster on which they painted ornament, of which some foliage and the figures of Moses and Daniel still remain.

Of the fourteenth century choir only two ruined chapels are standing, and on them grows now a small pine forest.

Visitors are taken through the south transept into the small church of St. Pierre, and most of them admire its eastern part without noticing that at its west there still remains a part of the original church which William Longsword built in 930. If the great Norman church is interesting for its early date, how much more is this remnant of an earlier than Norman art? The remains of the two little western towers are entered through two round-headed doorways, and another doorway gives admittance to the church. There are round panels over the two doorways, and also on the north wall over the two remaining bays of the triforium, the shafts of which are in one piece with their bases and have elaborately carved caps. Some traces of the original painting in the Byzantine style can be made out on the west wall where the two later layers of painting have crumbled away; on this lowest layer of pre-Norman work a white figure, probably an angel, is clearly distinguishable.

Next to the church of St. Pierre is the fifteenth century chapel of St. Martin, and between St. Pierre and the big church is the thirteenth century chapter-house. A little further west an ancient yew tree marks the site of the cloister. Further

is a large early thirteenth century building, which probably served as a library; you may notice the way in which the voussoirs of the almost flat entrance-arch are locked into each other.

Besides the gate-house by which you entered there is another separate house, which is now turned into a small museum. It contains the tomb of the Enervés and the incised slabs of three abbots, one of whom, Nicolas Leroux, was among the judges of Jeanne d'Arc. The black marble slab which covered the heart of Agnès Sorel is also preserved here. Agnès was the mistress of Charles VII., the careless king who was more responsible for Jeanne's death than any of her judges, and to her belongs some of the credit of that conversion which I spoke of in the last chapter. She had a manor at Mesnil, of which the remains can still be seen, and at her death in 1449 she bequeathed her heart to the monks of Jumièges. They remembered her charity, as the inscription shows:—"Cy gist noble damoiselle Agnes Seurelle, en son vivant dame de Beaulté . . . piteuse entre toutes gens, et qui largement donnait de ses biens aux églises et aux pouvres, laquelle trespassa le neuvième jour de février l'an de grâce 1449." During her lifetime Charles had apartments fitted up for himself in the abbey, where the kings of France had "*droit de gîte*," and the building which was probably the library is commonly called his Salle des Gardes.

How is it that the abbey church of Jumièges is such an utter ruin while that of Boscherville is intact? It is because the people of Jumièges would have it so. In 1793, when the monastery was suppressed, the Curé and parishioners of Jumièges refused to exchange their church for that of the abbey, which therefore was dismantled, and from 1802 (when people might have known better) became a quarry for all the farm buildings in the neighbourhood. So it has become during the present century as complete a ruin as if it had fallen under the hand of Henry VIII. in the sixteenth century, and only the freshness of its ornament shows that it has been destroyed by those who had

not even the excuse of religious fanaticism. But its giant towers and walls will yet survive many a generation—to return good for evil, for the village that was brought into existence by the abbey of Jumièges, still benefits by the renown of its frequented ruins.

And what sort of a place is the parish church which was thrown into the balance against the abbey? It is so unique that one can understand a little how its guardians saw the proud abbey church crumble away rather than part with their own. The three ages of architecture have each contributed to produce this freak of fortune. The sober Norman nave runs steeply up the hill, so steeply that to stand under the wooden patchwork of the tower is like being inside a ship at sea. Round the choir Ionic capitals are stuck conspicuously on the pillars, by way of contrast with the square-edged piers of the nave. Beyond is a range of flamboyant chapels, whose unachieved vaults are patched with plank ceilings; for some ambitious persons began a large choir and *chevet*, and dropped the work suddenly, as if a plague had struck them. The unfinished part of the new church was boarded on to the old in the roughest manner, and, inside, a wooden barrel vault under the tower joins the two parts together like the waist of a wasp. The abounding quaintness of the place is heightened by its rough wooden pews, and its collection of painted images on which many a rustic artist has exercised his skill. You may notice as an example of this the carving of a plough in the south aisle of the nave; its wheels are rudely picked out with a carpenter's stock and bit, yet I think its design and colour would win it an honourable place in the Arts and Crafts exhibition.

Going back from Jumièges, you keep straight along the road without turning at Yainville till you get back into the main road again. It passes by another forest, and leaves the river for a mile or two out of sight. Just beyond the stone that marks the second *kilomètre* this side of Caudebec, a road turns off on the left, and if you go along this road for a mile, you will come to St. Wandrille.

This abbey is a very popular place with tourists, for it is essentially picturesque, situated in a lovely valley and surrounded by a park. It did not become a ruin till the middle of the nineteenth century; now its Norman refectory remains, and its chapter-house, while the beautiful cloister is the more

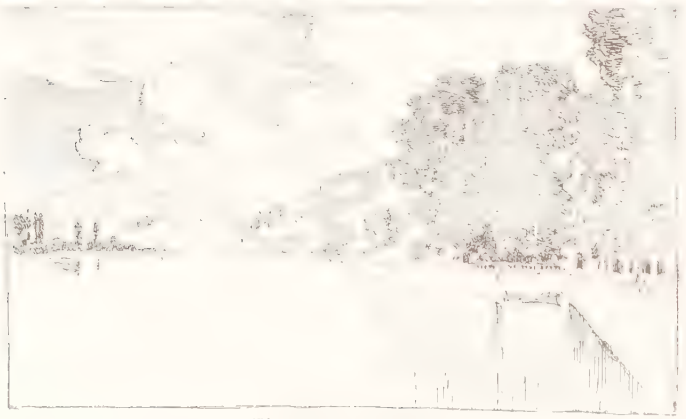
Jumièges.

worth seeing because cloisters are scarce in Normandy. It is still tenanted by monks, who will show visitors over, though indeed some of them would seem to have divorced courtesy when they wedded poverty.

But Caudebec, after all, is better than many ruins, for it is a living town. Indeed, this survival of Caudebec in the midst of a country which once so abounded in flourishing castles and abbeys, and ancient towns, such as St. Wandrille, Jumièges, Lillebonne, Brotonne, Maulévrier, Belcinac, has caused more than one writer to quote the lines which Sulpicius wrote in a letter to Cicero—"Alas, said I, weak mortals that we are! We grieve at the death of our friends, whose lives are so short,

while there lie before us, shapeless and lifeless, the corpses of so many famous cities."

Yet our first impression as we come on to the quay by the river is not of antiquity. Caudebec seems to be a quiet eighteenth century town, with square houses, homely hotels and cafés, that look on to the terrace shaded with elms, and on to the river with its boats and its ferry. It is only when we turn up



The Seine at Caudebec.

one of the streets that we find ourselves in the midst of a little medieval town. I need not describe it: you cannot help admiring the stream that runs so prettily along the Rue de la Boucherie, and its two precious stone houses—among the oldest in Normandy, and the timber houses in the same street as well as in the Rue de la Cordonnerie, the Rue de la Halle, and the Grande-Rue.

At every turn you will stumble against an easel; all through the summer months Caudebec has its portrait painted by the devout English. It might become conceited, did it not know in its old heart that what it is now every old city once was. Nay! there is one of Henri-Quatre's sayings on record to show that in his days it was thought a quite inferior specimen

of a town. Praising the church, he said 'twas the prettiest chapel in his kingdom of France; but, he added, "*le bijou est mal enchassé.*"

Rue de la Boucherie, Caudebec.

But to us starved creatures of a gaunt age, how pretty is the setting now!

And how pleasant is the country round, the walks to St. Gertrude and Villequier, and past the two villages of Bliquetuit to the forest of Brotonne, or further afield to Quillebœuf and Jumièges. Does not the river, as it bends round on either side under its hills, tempt one to stay and explore? And at high tides there is the spectacle of the famous *mascaret* or bore which the river banks make more furious than that of the Bay of Mont-St.-Michel.

But whatever we think of the setting, shall we not agree with

Henri IV. as to the jewel? It is a great thing to say that any church is the prettiest in Normandy; but I think that, if we keep strictly to the meaning of the adjective, we may say that Notre-Dame de Caudebec is the prettiest we have seen. It is so daintily conceived, so luxuriously finished, so complete in itself. And the setting has this special virtue, that it leaves a clear rim round the jewel, so that you can see its shape perfectly from every side.

It was begun in the fifteenth century, before the English occupation came to an end, but its finishing touches take us beyond Flamboyance, and on the west front we find a quaint parapet of Caryatids. The lower part of the front consists of three portals, which project like those of St. Maclou. Their canopy-work is as minute as stone-carving will go; especially interesting are the little angels with musical instruments (one of them has a bagpipe) in the central arch.

From the square on the south you can see the tower, which is the pride of Caudebec; it stands by itself, delicately buttressed and lightened with well-disposed windows; it is square, but on it rests the remarkable spire, octagonal at its base, and rising into a triple crown that is like a tiara. The carved work was too elaborate for its exposed position, and the spire had become rather bare of ornament, till the restoration of 1886 (in this case, perhaps, a defensible restoration) covered it up again. There is also a small leaded spire on the roof, bent back like a whip. The interesting little south porch, the traceried windows of aisle and nave, are all well seen from here, and also the two parapets, of which the upper one contains verses from the *Magnificat*.

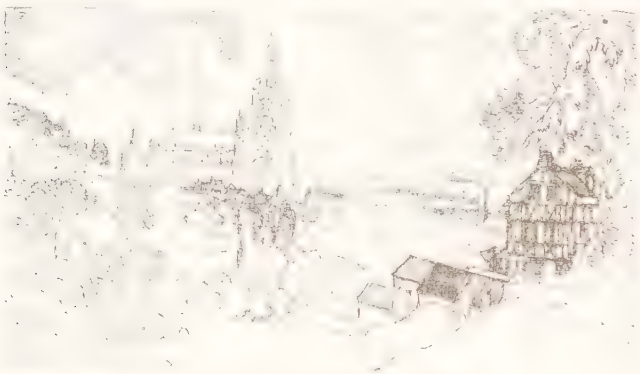
You will notice, inside the church, how the apse is made of two bays, like those of the nave, but set at an obtuse angle. And you cannot help seeing the lace-like piscinæ, and the curious sculptures of the Pietà. But, I think, the glass is the most interesting of all; the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the ancient and the modern style, are found here in very clear

contrast. For instance, in the second window of the north aisle there is a Jesse, with the donors in ruffs and huge sleeves, a rather coarse example, and next to it is a window of the fifteenth century, with three saints and a Pietà, far more restricted in the drawing, but far finer in sentiment. There is more of the earlier glass on the north side, and on the south two of the later windows bear the dates 1531 and 1532; one of these contains very elaborate classical architecture; but the best Renaissance glass is that in the tympanum of the south-west doorway, which represents a procession of the Host, with a city in the background.

At the foot of the tower.

When we leave Caudebec by the Grande-Rue, we see how

tightly the little town is wedged in at the opening of a steep valley, and we climb up the hill, losing sight regretfully at last of the church, and travelling without much to interest us across the large plateau that separates us from Lillebonne. As we pass through that ancient town, the Juliobona of the Romans,



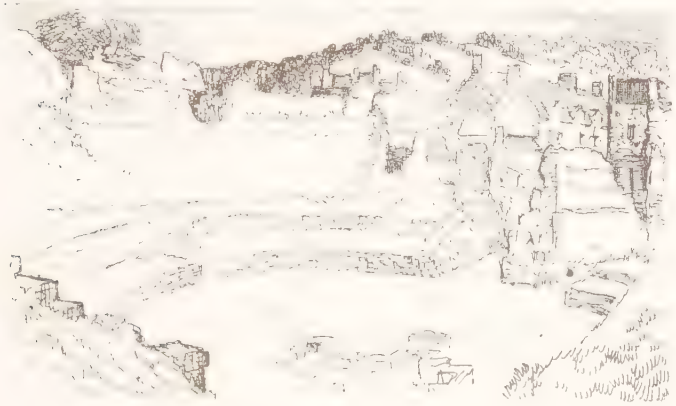
Candebec, from the Lillebonne Road.

we see the castle on our right, the theatre on the left of the main street, and the church a little farther on.

It is, of course, the Roman theatre that everybody comes to see, for in Northern Europe such a thing is a treasure of the rarest kind. Yet it may seem to you just a little bit disappointing, this well-kept semicircle of green turf. You look at it first from the railings that separate it from the road, and you wish there were a little more of it.

A hundred years ago there was very much less to be seen, and few troubled their heads about it. A *savant* named Caylus, decided that the remains belonged to a Roman theatre, but he had only plans to go upon, and did not think it worth while to travel to Lillebonne and see the place for himself. In 1812 excavations were begun, and the interior terraced out on the ancient plan. The people used to sit on the slope of the hill, Greek fashion, but the stone ranges of seats were broken

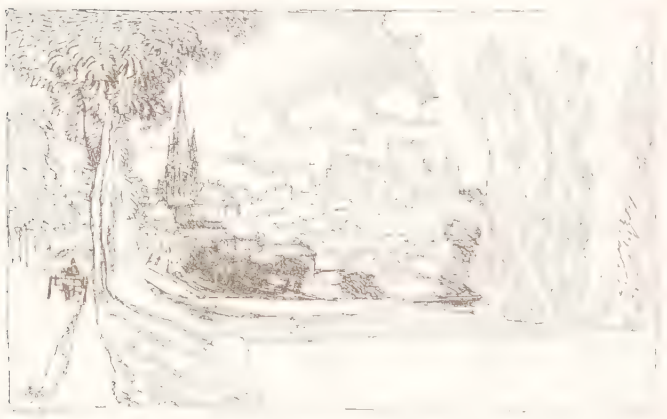
up long ago to build St. Wandrille. There is a large opening on either side, and a rising vaulted passage round the theatre gives access to the upper seats. It is here, in the upper part, that most of the masonry remains, small stones banded with



The Roman Theatre, Lillebonne.

courses of red tiles and enclosing a core of flint; and here, too, the seven vomitories can still be seen, and some of the stone seats. The portico stood where the road now is, and the inside of this portico formed the scene of the theatre, though it is possible that the place was used for combats as well, since the bones of beasts have been discovered. Coins of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius have also been dug up, which make it most probable that the theatre was built in the first half of the second century, when, as we know, Gaul was covered with Roman civilisation, and the two good emperors were her friends. If we could only see it as it was then, complete in all its parts, gay with decorations, and crowded from stage to awning with three thousand Gallo-Roman spectators!

Around the theatre stood the temples and villas and the castle of that ancient city. The site of the castle was too valuable to be neglected, and William the Conqueror, in comparatively



Lillebonne.

modern times, built here one of those strongholds, by means of which he bore down his enemies and wiped out his bar sinister. Here it was that the assembly met which decided on the invasion of England. Private grounds now surround the ruins, which are mainly remarkable for a fine round *donjon*, an addition that is later, however, than the age of the Norman dukes.

Our road turns round by the church (which, by the way, is not orientated), and as we leave Lillebonne behind us we can realise the singular beauty of its position in a bend of the hill.

The road now is perfectly flat all the way to Le Havre: for it lies on the land which was once part of the Seine-mouth, and under the cliffs that once formed its bounds: so on the one side there are always the fertile levels of recovered land, and on the other the conspicuous broken hills.

But the aspect of these constant features changes as the road winds along towards the broadening of the river. At first the hills are well-wooded, and gardens and orchards lie under their protection; at Tancarville the red-splashed cliffs force the road to curve out to the river at the issue of the canal

from Le Havre; beyond, they are sometimes abrupt and white, sometimes they slope easily down to the round, ribbed with sheep-walks; here and there they are opened by little dingles or by forest valleys. The road itself is sometimes bare enough, but oftener it has its banks of yellow rag-wort, with here and there a tall hemlock or a patch of hemp-agrimony,

Tancarville Castle.

while, beyond the tossing grasses that fringe the banks, the cattle graze with their ineffable satisfaction, unmoved by an occasional boat that passes up the invisible canal as if it were ploughing magically through the meadow.

The first incident after Lillebonne is Tancarville castle, which makes a good show on its small plateau about half-way up the hill. The corner bastion, the *Tour de l'Aigle*, looks down the road, and it is under its spur—projecting like the ram of a man-of-war—that the path leads up through a miniature park to the castle gate. The two towers flanking the entrance once contained prisons on their first floor; the room between the towers was for ordinary sinners, the room in the *Tour du Griffon* kept the big offenders safe within walls nine feet thick, while the rather lighter walls of the other tower were sufficient for those of intermediate iniquity. But now we are courteously taken through this once awful gate into a comfortable garden, where the *château* of 1709 reposes. It must be a capital place to live

in, with its big rooms and its big view over the Seine, and the consciousness that generations of fighting men have contributed to make the garden walls burglar-proof. The various parts of the old castle lie more or less in ruins around the garden: the restored Tour de l'Aigle which we have already marked; at the opposite end the cluster of ruins which once formed the heart of the place, the *grande salle* (its stories marked by fire-places one above the other), and the chapel. These buildings lie between two towers, that towards the river, the *Tour Carrée*, is the oldest part of the castle; it dates from the first part of the twelfth century and was not dismantled till the Revolution. The other and more imposing tower, called *Coquesart*, is some three hundred years later and of curious triangular shape: you will go in it and look up at the ribs of a ruined vault, suspended in the air. Behind are the ruins of the keep. From the *Tour Coquesart* the *chemin de ronde* led along the wall past the round *Tour du Lion* to the gateway. The wall is covered with split flints, and stables are now built up against it: the *Tour du Lion* has its mantle of ivy and its legend of the devil, though it inspires no terrors now in the servant who points it out to you, and rather resents the name of Devil's Tower which lovers of the marvellous have given to it. A *cachot* within this tower had impressed the popular imagination, till somebody started the theory that the Devil inhabited it. A certain chaplain took the matter seriously, and brought up a battalion of banners with a battery of holy-water. The affrighted people drew back while the good man entered alone, and after a minute of terrific silence returned to announce that he had seen the Fiend, exorcised him, and ordered him to depart, which he had done after making a horrible, and one would think an undignified, grimace.

It was one of the Lords of Tancarville who founded the Abbey of St. Georges de Boscherville. They were a powerful, turbulent race. Rabel de Tancarville was so strong that when he defied King Stephen the latter assured himself of the French King's support before venturing to attack him. William,

Rabel's son, sided with Henry II.'s rebellious children; but though Henry was both victorious and enraged, he ventured on no revenge. At the beginning of the fourteenth century Robert de Tancarville had a furious quarrel with the Sire de Harcourt, whose brother, the Tort de Harcourt, had seized a mill at Lillebonne; it ended in a fight before the three kings

Seine near Tancarville.

of France, England, and Navarre, at last the kings thought it would be a pity to lose two such valiant men, and the King of France cried Ho! and stopped the duel—*Donc fut crié ho de par le roy de France.* The race died out, and Tancarville passed to the Melun, who were in their turn extinguished at Agincourt, then to the Harcourt, and then to the usual double-barrelled names till the Revolution.

Soon after the castle we pass the high cliffs of Tancarville. They are very striking about here; the one that lies behind us, on the opposite side of the gorge, corresponding to that on which the castle stands, is called Pierre-Gante, that is, *Pierre du Géant*, because on the great over-hanging rock that crowns it like an immense roof Gargantua used to sit while he washed his feet in the Seine two hundred feet below. The river used to run close up to the castle walls within living memory.

Harfleur, or rather the spire of Harfleur's church, is the next object; for the town itself, which had been a favourite haven of the Norman pirates, and a flourishing port even in the Roman days, was at last left high and dry, till it became merely a remote suburb to the new port of Le Havre. The spire remained to sustain a proper pride among the inhabitants: fine rather than refined, it is extremely conspicuous in the neighbourhood, —"a stone giant commanding the Seine," it enjoys, according to the Abbé Cochet, "a colossal renown." It was built in the time of Louis XI., and not during the English occupation. Casimir Delavigne's lines are therefore not true—

Harfleur.

> "C'est le clocher d'Harfleur, debout pour vous apprendre
> Que l'Anglais l'a bâti, mais n'a su le défendre."

Everywhere in the Pays de Caux the country folk fall into this error of attributing all the important buildings to the English. This lingering tradition is valuable as showing how deeply the invasion stamped itself in the memory of the people, but it seems to be without foundation, except in the single case of Caudebec.

The north porch has also some renown, since a picture of it is given in Parker's *Glossary* to illustrate the word "Flamboyant." It is as high as the wall, and looks as if it were built in the wall's thickness, though it is really worked into an aisle. The church, by the way, must have been curiously shaped once, for though it has still five aisles, two others were destroyed in 1806, when the present south wall was run up.

At Harfleur it becomes clear that we are on the outskirts of a busy city. Tram lines and houses are with us for the rest of the way; yet once again we are to plunge back into the

remoter middle ages. Close to the dingy road, as we pass through the manufacturing suburb of Graville, the Norman tower of the priory church of Sainte-Honorine comes into view.

The mouth of the Seine.

It is admirably placed on the side of the hill, and its western doorway is reached by a long, imposing flight of steps.

There is a churchyard cross of the fourteenth century near the doorway, a fine example quite worthy of admiration for itself, but owing its present fame to the fact that the operatic managers of *Robert le Diable* (with the instinct of their kind for a blazing anachronism) introduced it into their scenery. From the cross there is a view of the Seine mouth and the shipping of the Havre.

The nave of the church is eleventh century, the choir early thirteenth. The early Norman exterior is very rich in carving, especially in the corbels, which afford a veritable bestiary ; the horse, bat, dog, pig, ram, are the most familiar creatures, but the old artists did not confine themselves to natural history, and in a corbel on the south side some one took a lasting revenge by carving a woman's likeness very carefully and then finishing it off with the ears of an ass. Poor thing ! it was not very chivalrous of him, even though he had suffered untold

things from her tongue; that tongue has long been dust, but the well-marked portrait remains for every tourist to smile at, and thus does the artist get the better of the orator. The end of the north transept is a celebrated piece of architecture; it is

The Church at Graville.

ornamented with a curious band of carving that is generally, though inaccurately, called a Zodiac.

Inside, the church is remarkable for its capitals, which bear some resemblance to those at Boscherville, as I have pointed out. There are two "tournament" scenes, of which the best belongs to the fourth pier on the south of the nave.

The tomb of the patron saint, a plain massive stone coffin, was found in the wall in 1867, and can now be seen in the north choir aisle. St. Honorine was martyred in the third century on the Roman road between Lillebonne and Harfleur; her body was thrown into the river and washed ashore at Graville; but at the Norman invasion it was taken out of harm's way to Conflans, and there kept. Only the tomb in which it then lay remains to the church that has kept alive the memory of its obscure martyr; but there are few monuments more affecting than this rude sarcophagus that has been void for a thousand years.

St. Jouin, near Étretat.

CHAPTER XIII

LE HAVRE TO DIEPPE. LE HAVRE, ÉTRETAT, FÉCAMP, VALMONT, SAINT-VALÉRY-EN-CAUX, MANOIR D'ANGO, POURVILLE.

"APRÈS Constantinople, il n'est rien de plus beau!"

So wrote Casimir Delavigne, the conventional and patriotic poet, in a line that sums up his character, if it fails to describe his birthplace. To the mere stranger beauty does not appear the salient characteristic of Le Havre. He remembers it as a busy, rather dingy port, like Liverpool or a dozen other places, with just those fine qualities which subjugated water never fails to give; he remembers it, too, as a place of dreary and dear hotels (for France), of crowded streets and lively shops. In fact it is the very opposite of the places he is used to in Normandy, a town of the present day with a mushroom history of less than four centuries. Think of it after Ouistreham or Lillebonne! There are, it is true, plenty of watering places compared with which Le Havre is venerable, but it has not their new-fangled graces, and its casino is a glum mockery.

So it is that travellers often fly from Le Havre at the break of day. Yet, if they stay and get used to it, they may alter their first opinion. It is pleasant to watch the great ships shooting their way out of the *avant-port*, pleasant to see the sun setting over the sea and the lights breaking out at Trou-

The Hôtel de Ville, Havre.

ville on the other side of the bay. And is it not always worth while to wander among the docks, and along the streets behind, where seafaring men from all countries enjoy the hospitality of France? And down by the Rue de Paris there are excellent *cafés;* for this is the real centre of the town, and the hotels here are cheerful enough. Besides, there is a west end, the Boulevard Maritime, which the hasty visitor does not discover at all; and here is a brighter casino and a real beach. There are several bathing places, too; and, without going further than that leased by the Hôtel Frascati, you can dive into good water at high tide.

In the Rue de Paris is the church of Notre-Dame, which contains the history of Le Havre. For there was a sailors' chapel of Notre-Dame de Grâce when François I. founded, in 1517, the new port, which was called Havre-de-Grâce and sometimes Françoisville. In the modern glass of the Lady Chapel

are told some of the stories of its stirring early history, and a shell that is preserved there bears witness to the dangers that even the church did not escape. Indeed, Le Havre was held by the English in Elizabeth's reign, when they were admitted in 1562 by the French Protestants; they seized the recently-finished tower of the church, and finding guns posted there, turned them upon the royal camp. When the English were driven out, the belfry was punished for its apostasy by the loss of its spire and the lowering of its walls, so that it could no longer be a danger to the town. The church itself was not begun till 1574, as the inscription of Master-Mason Duchemin tells us. The strange aisles and chapels were not built till well into the seventeenth century.

Whether we like Le Havre or not, at least it takes a graceful leave of us, if we go by the direct route to Étretat (leaving

Montivilliers as too far out of the way); as we ride along the Boulevard Maritime we begin to wonder whether we have quite done it justice, and then, leaving the Cap de la Hève on the left we find ourselves on the side of a valley that might be in Switzerland.

After this interlude the country assumes the aspect which is characteristic of this part of the Pays de Caux. There are

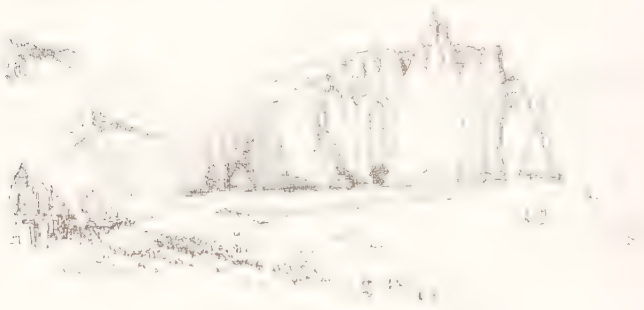
Falaise d'Amont, Étretat.

always slight undulations, but never any hills. Neither are there hedges, the broad fields are bare—bare earth and stubble, both golden under a September sun. Instead of the homely cottages and the low buildings of a farm which you might expect, the presence of man the subduer is betokened by square green islands of elm-trees. The trees grow in serried ranks on low ramparts of earth, and form lofty walls, within which farms and orchards lie at peace when the winds blow from the sea.

Just at the end of this easy and pleasant side, we pass the *château* of Fréfossé whose disproportionately huge spires importune the passer-by, and then the road slips down into Étretat.

A quiet little beach in a tiny bay between two white capes; on the beach fishing boats are stranded, and fishermen sit

mending sea-green nets. Such is Étretat at certain hours of the day. But if you go into the Casino a little later, Étretat appears an entirely different place. It is crowded, you find, with French and English, who walk up and down with one noble altruistic purpose, that of enabling you to study the latest frocks that needle and purse have managed to achieve. There is all the difference in the world between this place and Le Havre; there folk were making money, here they are trying



Falaise d'Aval, Étretat.

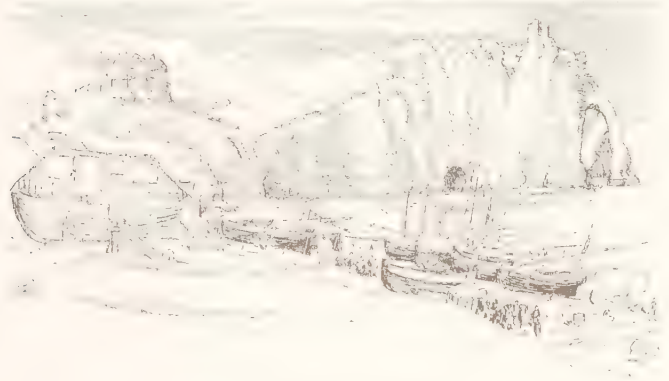
to spend it, and if they find that difficult, the "little horses" will help them. Étretat is fashionable.

The reason of it is this. Ninety people out of a hundred are more or less blind. They are incapable of perceiving a pretty place when they see it, or at least they were, fifty years ago. Then some one is born with eyes in his head. He finds that his country swarms with villages that are beautiful. He goes to one or two for his holidays. If he is selfish, or very wise, or both, he says nothing, but if he has to write books in order to get any holiday at all, what is he to do?

Isabey discovered Étretat, and said nothing. Alphonse Karr discovered it, and wrote books, among others *Le Chemin le plus Court*, in which the unknown village was often mentioned. "Where is this pretty place?" asked the world and

his wife, more especially his wife. They came here, and said, "Yes, it is very beautiful." And, lest they should be bored by so much beauty, they brought their waiters, and musicians, and "little horses." Étretat in gratitude possessed itself of a Rue Alphonse-Karr.

Presumably it was the high chalk cliffs that made the fortune of Étretat, those two white capes which enclose the



The Beach, Étretat.

little bay. That on the right is called the *Falaise d'Amont* and throws out an arch at its extremity; the other is called the *Falaise d'Aval* and also throws out an arch, or rather a flying buttress, into the sea. The opening thus formed is called the *Porte d'Aval*; above it the end of the cape is marked by a sham castle which has sham ornaments, and even sham cracks, and a sham wooden bridge made of cement. But it is worth while going there to look down the sheer precipice at the blue sea far below, and to see the *Aiguille d'Étretat* which is more than two hundred feet high, and the other "needle" on which is the platform called the Chambre aux Demoiselles.

And who were these Demoiselles? They were three sisters who lived at Étretat, as fair as they were good. The Chevalier de Fréfossé, a lord of evil renown, sent his men to seize them

and bring them to his castle. But all his efforts were in vain against the pride of their modesty. Whereat in his exceeding wrath he put them into barrels and threw them over the cliff. From that hour the pursuer was pursued; often would three white figures be seen mournfully singing at the Chambre aux Demoiselles, and whenever the Chevalier went to pleasant feast or joust the three white figures went with him. At length he died of the horror of his remorse, and thenceforward the white forms were no longer seen, nor did their plaintive song trouble any longer the frightened fisherfolk of Étretat. If you stay at Étretat you can go and see the other pierced cape beyond Aval, the Manneport, and the long tunnel of Amont which acts as a kind of waste-pipe to the bay, and preserves Étretat from flooding in stormy weather.

When you set off for Fécamp you will pass out of Étretat by the very interesting church, which has a Norman nave with two Early French bays, choir, transepts, and high lantern. Legend ascribes its unusual situation to the devil, who removed the stones every night from the site that had been chosen, till the pious foundress decided that it would be more humble to struggle no more against the powers of evil.

The Fécamp road creeps up along the side of the hill, and to the mere cyclist it is memorable for the two tiresome climbs out of the quiet villa-villages of Vattetot and Yport; but it is only thirteen miles to Fécamp, and pretty all the way, especially when Fécamp itself comes into sight.

You have been vociferously told in every town you have passed through that Fécamp is famous for its Benedictine establishment, and the letters D. O. M. which you have seen everywhere may lead you to expect a quiet home of monks. But the much advertised Benedictine appeals not to the soul, but to the stomach; the spiritual house is gone and only the carnal one flourishes; for France has changed.

Before the Revolution the Abbey stood in all its pride within its own fortified enclosure. Two cloisters on the

church's north side were separated by the refectory, and had each a fountain in its midst, while the great library stretched right along one side of the double quadrangle. Many other churches were gathered near it in the streets of Fécamp. Of these St. Etienne remains, a queer jumble of Flamboyant and Renaissance, that seems to be nearly all choir, with just its heavy-piered tower for nave; for the real nave is such a

Normandy Farm, near Étretat.

makeshift that the stranger fancies himself already in the porch. As for the abbey, whose glories old Wace had sung—

> "Li Mustier de Fescam. . . .
> Ki est de grant auctorité
> El nun de saincte Trinité."

it was secularised at the Revolution, when eight churches in the town and several chapels were altogether suppressed. This was the process: in 1790, the National Assembly confiscated all Church property, and the monks of Fécamp were invited to go back into the world, though most refused to do so. Next year all the churches of Fécamp were suppressed except St. Etienne and the abbey church, which was now called merely Ste. Trinité, and was given an ex-Benedictine monk for *curé*. In 1793, a good deal more progress had been made:

the city archives have preserved for us an account of the Feast of Reason that was held on the "20 Frimaire, an II."

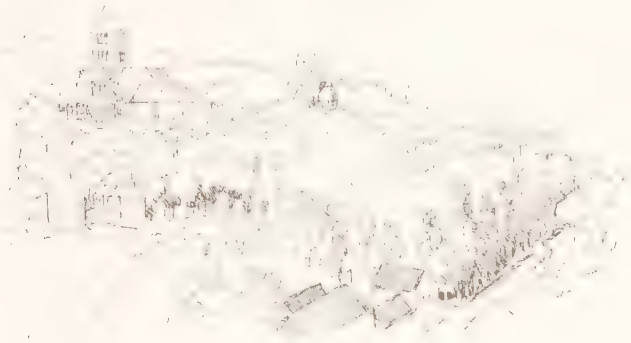
It was *décadi*, the new-fangled Sunday freed from the trammels of superstition and properly arranged on the decimal system. Shop-keepers who did not close on this decimal day, or who dared to put up their shutters on the "*jour du ci-devant dimanche*," were condemned to eight days (why not ten days?) imprisonment. A procession left the "Maison Commune" and proceeded to the "Place de la Liberté;" in front marched the volunteers with a band, then came *La Liberté* holding in her hand a pike on which was the symbolic red cotton night-cap, then *L'Egalité* who held a level, and last of all, surrounded by schoolmasters and schoolmistresses with their children, and by young *citoyennes* dressed in white, walked *La Raison*, who was no less a person than "*la citoyenne Floriand* (*comédienne*)." In the Place de la Liberté stood a veiled statue of Liberty, and at its feet a pyre. On the back of an ass were now solemnly brought up "*les attirails odieux de l'erreur*," to wit, the attributes of fanaticism, royalty, and feudalism; *La Raison* set light to the pyre, and threw on to it the odious paraphernalia. Then the *citoyenne Liberté* unveiled the statue, and put into its hand a pike with the red cap, while the crowd sang "*l'hymne chérie de la Liberté*." After this touching ceremony the procession formed up again, and marched to the "Temple" (formerly known as the church of Ste. Trinité). In the Temple was an altar, the description of which I dare not spoil by translation:—

> "un autel simplement décoré et consacré à la prosperité de la patrie, sur lequel un feu pur, symbole de la génération, a brûlé à l'honneur du premier don de la nature, celui de la Raison."

On the right of the altar stood citizen Liberty, on the left citizen Equality, in the midst citizen Reason advanced and

unveiled a statue of Reason, while the Temple resounded with cries of *Vive la République! Vive la Liberté! Vive la Montagne!* A hymn to Reason was then sung, after which "orators and philosophers" spoke, no doubt at some length, on the benefits of liberty, and the horrors of superstition, fanaticism, and tyranny.

Easy enough to smile at the quaint ceremony! But I confess with me the smile gives way before a sorrowful respect



The Churches, Fécamp.

for men who did at least believe in something besides their own "glory," and who held their faith with such childlike, childish, and altogether touching simplicity. The freshness of that new world soon faded, and men began to see that they were not living in the second year of the Millennium, but in the second millennium of the Christian era. In 1795, the wave began to recede; Catholic worship was allowed once more in the choir of Ste. Trinité.

The abbey church remains intact, with its late and ugly conventual buildings, now devoted to municipal purposes. It is a Transitional church, plain and to my mind clumsy. In fact I do not like it much; and therefore I will give you Freeman's word for it that the church is "one of the noblest even in Nor-

mandy, and it is in remarkably good preservation." In *Travels in Normandy and Maine* he describes the nave thus:—"The whole of this western limb is built in the simplest and severest form of that earliest French Gothic, which to an English eye seems to be simply an advanced form of the transition from Romanesque. . . . . The large triforium, the untraceried windows, the squareness of everything except a few English round abaci in some bays of the triforium, the external heaviness and simplicity, all make the early Gothic of Fécamp little more than pointed Romanesque."

There is a bay of earlier work, Norman of the end of the eleventh century, on the north of the choir. The rest of the choir is Transitional; but on its south side the triforium was very cleverly cut away in the fourteenth century to allow of a high vault to the ambulatory, and with but slight alteration this part of the church was thus converted into the late Gothic style.

The stone screens in the ambulatory are remarkable examples of François-Premier decoration. M. Palustre says that they are much better than the more famous work at Laon; and certainly with their cupids and dragons and dolphins, their strange little columns, some twisted, some divided, and some square, they represent the wanton grace of the early Renaissance at its height. Visitors generally have their attention drawn to the large coloured sculpture in the south transept of the Falling Asleep of the Virgin; it was carved about the year 1500 by a monk of Fécamp, and bears all the marks of a well-meaning amateur; the prominent figure of a man blowing up the charcoal in the censer is a bit of *genre* that illustrates his want of tact.

Behind the high altar and facing the Lady chapel is a small tabernacle of the sixteenth century which contains the famous relic of the Precious Blood. This relic has a far more marvellous history than that of the Saint-Sang at Bruges; but for all that it is still venerated, and the *Fontaine du Précieux-Sang*,

in the Rue de l'Aumône, is even now frequented by many who believe in its healing virtues. The ancient account of the legend can be bought of the guardian of the well: it is long and exceedingly involved, but its main features are these:—

Joseph of Arimathæa, when he buried the body of Christ, took some of the blood from the wounds and hid it in a glove. This he cherished with great reverence all his life and bequeathed to his nephew Isaac with the words, "Here is the blood of that great prophet, Jesus, whom our fathers unjustly crucified." Isaac kept the precious gift in a cupboard, and adored it every day; and because of it, from poverty he grew into great richness. His wife wondered at this change in his estate, and asked him the reason. When he told her, she was angry at his breaking the law of the Jews, and delivered him up to them for idolatry. But the power of Christ protected him, and the Jews let him go free on condition that he would no longer worship his idol. He then left Jerusalem, and took up his abode at Sidon, where he continued his devotions unmolested. But one night he was warned in a dream that Titus and Vespasian were coming to Palestine to destroy the temple at Jerusalem.

He therefore set himself to discover a means of concealing the Precious Blood in safety; and at last bethought him of a great fig-tree that grew in his garden. He made a round hole in this tree, and placed the relic therein, having first sealed it up in a little vessel of lead, which he made long and narrow according to the size of the hole. Another hole and another leaden vessel he made to contain a piece of iron which had been one of the instruments of the Crucifixion. When he had closed the openings with great care, lo! the bark grew over them, and hid every mark of his work. It was by this miracle that he learnt for the first time that Christ was God as well as Man.

After some time had passed, the dream-voice that he had heard before warned him of the approach of the Roman legions, and told him to cut down the fig tree. This he did, leaving

only the trunk with its sacred contents. But at last he found he could keep it intact no longer, for it was dead and the ground swamped by the salt waters, and so he dug it up and threw it into the sea with a fervent prayer that God would lead it to some honest place. Another vision consoled him with the message that God would cause the trunk to be carried to one of the furthest provinces of France. It was indeed cast up on to the valley which thenceforward has been called *Fici campus*, the field of the fig-tree, or Fécamp.

There is a legend for you! But that is only the beginning of the Histoire du Précieux-Sang. All the strange things that happened to the wonderful trunk before its contents were discovered make a story twice as long as that of its arrival on these shores.

It is, I suppose, difficult to avoid a visit to the Benedictine factory, which forms the last chapter in the legend of the fig-tree. However false the ficulnean etymology may be, it is historically true that Fécamp owed its monastery and its prosperity to its possession of the miraculous relic. And from its monastery sprang the liqueur, which was invented, it is said, by a monk of the abbey, Dom Vincelli, about the year 1510. At first it was intended as a cordial for the sick whom the monks visited. At the Revolution the recipe was saved by the steward of the abbey, a descendant of whom is now the director of the factory. Wise in his generation, this gentleman has maintained a close connection with the Church; the Archbishop of Rouen blessed the new buildings in 1895 (they are, I understand, much admired in France); the Pope made the director a Commander of the Order of St. Gregory (needless to say, he was already a Knight of the Legion of Honour); the sisters of St. Vincent de Paul look after the girls who make up the bottles. Furthermore, a good collection of relics from the abbey—seals, vessels, enamels, ivories, and furniture—is preserved in the museum, which is shown to visitors. They are not, however, initiated into the mysteries of the manufacture, but must

be content with the later stages of bottling, sealing, and packing; in fact, with those minor operations that are calculated to impress them with an idea of the enormous trade done by "*La Bénédictine.*"

Fécamp, having been built in the days before sea-bathing was appreciated, is really an inland town, and the abbey is some way from the sea. There is a good port, but the sea-front is passing dull, and Fécamp is not a favourite place for a stay. On the cliff to the north is the restored chapel of Notre-Dame de Salut; near it, where the lighthouse now stands, a fort was built in 1591, and this was the scene of a marvellous exploit in the following year. Bois-Rosé, a captain of the Catholic *Ligue* that opposed Henry IV., determined to make himself master of the fortress, strongly guarded though it was on every side except that of the cliff, which was deemed inaccessible. Having first got two trusty men admitted into the enemy's garrison, he set out one dark and stormy night with fifty men in two boats, and reached the foot of the cliff. The confederates above let down a rope to which Bois-Rosé attached a knotted cable. When this was drawn up to the top of the cliff and securely fixed, the adventurers began to climb up it, two sergeants in front and Bois-Rosé himself at the rear. But when they were about half-way up there was a stop. Bois-Rosé found that one of the sergeants had lost his nerve and refused to go on. Thereupon the intrepid captain climbed up over the shoulders of his men till he reached the sergeant, and, pointing his sword at his breast, forced him to go on. They all reached the top without further misadventure, killed the sentries, and took the garrison prisoners.

After Fécamp the road leaves the sea and goes straight to Cany; but if you have time it will be worth while to go round by Valmont, which contains the seat of the Sires d'Estouteville, a fine castle with one picturesque fifteenth century wing, and one of 1536 that has been altered in later times. There is also a Norman keep, and an imposing ruined abbey with quasi-Doric

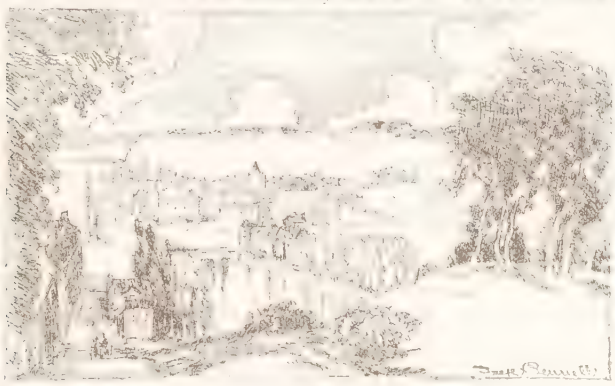
piers and an Ionic triforium. The abbey has a beautiful vaulted chapel, called the Chapelle de Six-Heures, that is not ruined; besides its sixteenth century glass, it contains a sculptured Annunciation over the altar, and three tombs of the Sires d'Estouteville which Victor Hugo made famous in his *Notre-Dame de Paris*. One is a sixteenth century monument of Nicolas d'Estouteville, who founded the abbey in the days when William the Conqueror was still struggling for his duchy. This Nicolas seems to have been an unpleasant person, who built his abbey on the sweating system. His daughter used to take food to the half-starved workmen, and the same story is told of her as of St. Elizabeth of Hungary—that her father met her once and asked what she was concealing under her cloak, and she replied that she had only a bundle of roses and some water, and so by a miracle it was.

Saint-Valéry-en-Caux is a picturesque old watering-place; everybody knows its Maison Henri IV., a fine timber house (though robbed of its dormers) where the king does really seem to have stayed. St. Valéry came in for its share of hard knocks, as you can read in the guide books, but you will not read there about Mademoiselle de Bréauté. Like the lady at Valmont, her charity was repressed by a churlish father, and, indeed, another Miracle of the Roses is told of her. When he died she took a gentle revenge by devoting herself entirely to the poor. She was famous all over the country for her wonderful beauty. Then, disturbed at the homage it brought, she prayed that the perilous gift might be taken back. And so it was; the beauty faded out of her face. But (and here, I think, is the virtue of the story) people admired her none the less, and the renown of her loveliness continued unabated. It is not yet forgotten; many a vain wench has been rebuked with the words, "*Quand tu seras belle comme mademoiselle de Bréauté . . . !*"

Veules is a charming village between the cliffs, much loved by painters, and crowded, of course, in the summer. But I

must hurry you on, or there will be no room to say anything about Dieppe. And my purpose is that you shall have a little spare daylight to go round by Le Mesnil, five miles this side of Dieppe, and turn off there to see the Manoir d'Ango.

Jean Ango, the "Medici of Dieppe," was born about 1480; his father had made a fortune by sea, but was rich enough in



St. Valéry-en-Caux.

1508 to send off two ships on an attempt to colonise Newfoundland. When his father died, Jean gave up seafaring and stayed at home in Dieppe to pile up more fortune as an *armateur*—the word means more than our "ship-owner," for it includes privateering as well as the normal methods of trade. Jean soon had a fleet in his possession, through which he traded with all quarters of the globe from the East Indies to the New World. By 1525 his fortune had become fabulous; he lived as a prince, and built a glorious house of sculptured oak that was the wonder of every traveller who saw it; even Italians were astonished thereat, and they found it filled with masterpieces from their own country. Not content with this house in Dieppe, he built the Manoir that now perpetuates his name, for a *maison de plaisance* in the country.

In 1532 Ango entertained François I. with a refinement of

magnificence that was only possible to a merchant prince who could collect luxuries from every part of the world. The King was dazzled by this Orient display and made his host a *Vicomte*. At this time the noble *armateur* had some fifteen or twenty warships to protect his merchant fleets. His men had many quarrels with Flemish and Portuguese sailors; and at last a

Fishing-boats.

vessel of his was seized and dragged into Lisbon after its crew had been massacred. Ango at once despatched a fleet to the Bay of Biscay, burnt several Portuguese villages, and captured some richly laden ships. The Portuguese never thought that so formidable an attack upon their coasts could be the work of a private citizen, but sent to ask the King the reason of France's violation of peace. François replied: "*Messieurs, ce n'est pas moi qui vous fais la guerre. Allez trouver Ango, et arrangez vous avec lui.*"

At the death of François, fortune began to desert Ango. He now lived no longer in his beautiful house, but in the castle as Governor, and his pride was so great that his old companions hated him. The climax came when in full assembly he struck a merchant named Morel for venturing to disagree with him. Morel lost no time in taking revenge: he accused Ango in court of having swindled when they had acted in partnership over some trading venture. Encouraged by his success, five or

six other of Ango's neglected comrades brought further actions. Ango had squandered most of his huge fortune in magnificence, and now creditors came swarming in to take his pictures, his plate, his houses. For a year or two more he lingered on in the castle, not daring to go out, and then died lonely and impoverished in 1551.

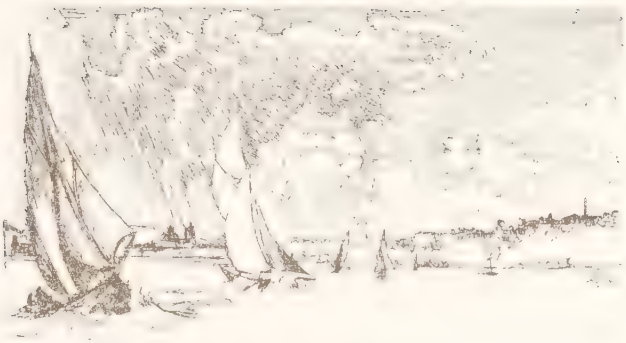
Poplar lined road.

The country house which this sumptuous merchant-venturer built for himself in 1532 is one of the most delightful bits of domestic work in Normandy. It forms a quadrangle, entered by two archways, and at one end of it stands one of those *colombiers* which were a privilege of high estate in France; never were pigeons better housed than in this beautiful round tower. The

most interesting side of the quadrangle has a *loggia* with round arches, oval windows below, and Renaissance doorways with little Gothic spandrels. There is nothing fixed or mechanical about this early classicalism : it has a living style of its own, better than the debased Gothic it succeeded as it was better than the heavy formalism into which it was so soon to degenerate. Such is the Manoir d'Ango, fallen like its master from high estate, and now a mere farmyard where the cock triumphs on his dungheap and the sow wallows in abundant mire.

The last dip before the hill that leads down to Dieppe contains the little villa-station of Pourville, which was the scene of a curious incident. In 1650, the famous Duchess of Longueville, in order to avenge the detention of her husband, tried to raise Normandy against the king. The Parlement of Rouen repulsed her, and she had to content herself with taking possession of Dieppe Castle, from which coign of vantage she threatened with her cannon the town at her feet. But the Dieppois, so far from being alarmed, determined to turn the tables on the Duchess and frighten her out of the castle. They lit lanterns in every house in order to make her think they were planning some terrible surprise. The stratagem succeeded ; the poor Duchess was so much alarmed by the vigilant appearance of the unawed city that she fled that very night, fled precipitately over the drawbridge and down the hill, fled with only a few proven domestics, fled so hurriedly that, poor soul ! she tumbled into the river at Pourville.

Trembling with fear and cold, this victim of the horrors of war was conducted to the *presbytère*, where Monsieur Letellier, the *curé*, received her with all the honour due to her rank, sex, and misfortunes. He burned large quantities of wood for her benefit, and put the cellar of his little house at the disposal of her suite. Cider and warmth consoled Madame de Longueville, and she showed her gratitude by giving the *curé* a pension of 200 *livres* (drawn from another clergyman's living) and the right to take 200 fagots from her forest of Hautôt.



Fishing boats leaving Dieppe.

CHAPTER XIV

DIEPPE, ARQUES, EU.

THERE is no seaside place like Dieppe. It is not only the sea, though that seems always to have a special blueness here, nor the further ranges of high white cliffs which take up the blue of the sea, nor the hills and villages and forest of the countryside, nor the ancient castle which looks across the broad lawns that keep the beach and sea-front so happily apart. It is all these, combined with the fact that Dieppe, in spite of its vogue, is still an old-fashioned town. The sober white houses of its front are comparatively unspoilt by modern attempts at self-advertisement, and its high-street is such a thoroughfare as Sterne might have walked in.

This special character is partly due to a melancholy exploit of our own. In 1694 an English fleet, annoyed by the privateers of Dieppe, threw bombs into the town till the whole place was ablaze. The old wooden town disappeared, and with it the house of Ango, which was said to be the finest in Normandy. Thenceforward formal houses were slowly built around the Gothic church of St. Jacques and its later neighbour, St. Remi, which had both escaped destruction. But on the other side of the harbour, the suburb of Le Pollet is irregular enough, and as different to Dieppe as if miles of water lay between them.

It is the home of the fishermen, who sail away as far as the north of Scotland in search of the herring, and pursue the cod in the waters of Newfoundland.

The cliff above Le Pollet is still called Le Bastille, and a few bits of wall with some caverns can be seen from the quay to remind us of the fortress which was built here in 1562, and demolished a century later. But the name takes us back to earlier times. It was Talbot who first established a *bastille* on Le Pollet, when he laid siege to Dieppe. In the midwinter of 1442 he built on the summit of the cliff a large and strong tower of wood, surrounded by a fosse, and provided with twenty cannon besides smaller arms. Leaving a garrison in possession, he then sailed for England to collect troops and a blockading squadron. The Dieppois appealed to King Charles VII. Louis the Dauphin was with the King at Poitiers when the appeal came; he was burning to distinguish himself, and undertook to raise the siege. With some experienced captains and 1,600 troops he marched down in the summer of 1443; by the time he reached Dieppe his army was doubled in numbers. It was Sunday, August 10th: without waiting to rest his men, the impetuous youth (he was just twenty) crossed the river at five on the Sunday evening and began the siege. The English tried two sorties which were unsuccessful, but Louis could not retaliate without some means of attack. So for the next three days he set his engineers to make six rolling bridges, looking anxiously the while for signs of the dreaded English fleet. On Wednesday the bridges were ready, and at night they were taken over to Le Pollet. On Thursday morning the assault began. The six bridges were run on wheels in an upright position, and were so made that when they reached the fosse they could be lowered across it, so that their further ends rested on the escarp. This operation being managed successfully, the French took their scaling ladders across and began an escalade from six points at once. But the stones and arrows of the English were too much for

them; a hundred rolled into the fosse, and the rest retired discomfited.

It was now mid-day. The Dauphin was foaming with rage. The faces of his captains told him too clearly what they thought of his inexperienced rashness. But the passion of battle was on him: he seized a ladder, dashed to the fosse, threw himself

The Market, Dieppe.

on one of the bridges, and began to climb the wall. Needless to say, the whole army rushed to help him, and reached the wall as soon as he. They streamed up the ladders with such fury that the English fell back, and after losing five hundred men were forced to surrender. The bastille was razed to the ground.

Meanwhile, all day long the clergy had been walking in procession through the streets of Dieppe, praying for the success of their defenders. When the fight was over, Louis went straight off to St Jacques, blood-stained as he was, to give thanks to the Blessed Virgin, the Vigil of whose Assumption it was that day.

What a contrast there is between the fearless dashing Louis the Dauphin of twenty in the flush of his first success, and the King Louis XI. of forty years later, self-imprisoned in his iron-bound castle of Plessis-les-Tours, a living skeleton

splendidly dressed in velvet and furs, living there as if he were in a state of siege, consumed with suspicions, forbidding his courtiers to breathe the very name of death, practising strange superstitions, hated, hating, courted, and alone!

For ages after, the Vigil of the Assumption was kept as a glorious anniversary in Dieppe. The occasion was marked by the very curious observances called *Les Mitouries de la Mi-Aoust.* They continued, long after other miracle-plays had died out, down to 1647, when Louis XIV. happened to witness them and was so shocked at their want of decorum that he ordered their discontinuance. I do not wonder. This is what used to happen every August in Dieppe. For two or three hours a procession paraded the town consisting of eleven *Confrères de la Mi-Aoust* dressed up as apostles, one priest disguised as St. Peter, and one beautiful young girl who was supposed to represent the Blessed Virgin; she was borne about in a leafy couch, and the procession was accompanied by all the magistrates and officials bearing tapers. At the Church of St. Jacques the crush was so great that the soldiers had to force a way for the procession with their halberds. Two masts on either side of the high altar supported a platform which stood at a great height against the end of the choir. On this platform a venerable old man represented *le Père Eternel*; he wore a tiara, sat on a cloud, and was surrounded by the sun and a multitude of stars. Marionettes in the form of angles circulated around him; they were so cunningly worked that they not only swung censers, but even put out the candles when service was over, and some of them when the organ sounded held trumpets to their lips with such life-like effect that the people went mad with delight. Before the high altar a sort of garden was arranged, with waxen flowers and fruits, and here the Virgin lay on her death bed. As the Mass began in this strange blending of mummery and worship, she was drawn up by angels, but so slowly that she did not arrive at the platform till the moment of adoration, when the *Père Eternel* blessed her thrice, and the angels laid

a crown upon her head. The Mass was said by St. Peter, and the other Apostles were forced to communicate on pain of a fine. To add to the extraordinary mixture, a buffoon, long famous as *Gringalet*, played the fool and apostrophised the most sacred personages, to the intense delight of the congregation. The day ended fitly with orgies all over Dieppe.

After the triumph of 1443, an extraordinary era of prosperity began for Dieppe. It is difficult for us now to imagine that her merchant fleet was the best in France. Yet Henri II. once consulted with Coligny as to how he could raise a fleet powerful enough to chastise the Flemish, and the great admiral replied, "Only the burgesses and merchants of Dieppe could furnish such a thing to your majesty." And so they did. Nineteen peaceful-looking vessels sailed out from the port, and fourteen of them returned anon with six large Flemish ships in tow, survivors of a merchant fleet. Both the churches of Dieppe bear ample witness to the city's golden age, indeed St. Remi was built just at its height, and the later additions to St. Jacques are steeped in reminiscence of Ango.

St. Jacques is everything to Dieppe. It stands in the heart of the town, to link it with the incredible past, and throws out its own weather-worn daintiness of intricate form in happiest contrast with the well-kept regularity that has grown up around it. To the mere architect it is remarkable for the battlements on its tower, since the ornamental use of battlements, so constant in England, is found nowhere else in French churches (if we except a fragment in the English town of Calais). The battlements, which are pierced, surmount the lower story of the tower, and are therefore not very conspicuous; they are due to some English influence, and indeed, the principal windows of the story are quite Perpendicular in character. The upper part of the tower was added later, as is shown by its mixed Flamboyant and Renaissance workmanship. You will hardly fail to notice also the western turrets, whose gargoyles spread so curiously from their flat tops,

The Tower of St. Jacques.

but the west front itself is interesting also, for it is complete fourteenth century, and façades of the Decorated style are uncommon in France,—as it is, the rose-window comes very

near to Flamboyance, and even the angles about it are pierced.

Going round the fine but crumbling lateral porches, which take us back to the thirteenth century, you come to the *chevet*, which was at any time a worthy rival of the more famous east end of St. Pierre at Caen, and is now alone in its glory; for the restorer has rebuilt St. Pierre, but St. Jacques has kept him off from its picturesque jumble of Flamboyant and Renaissance audacities, its niches, turrets, parapets, and candelabrum pinnacles,—even from the old red-tiled roof of its Lady Chapel.

Ango built these chapels about fifteen years after Hector Sohier had designed the *chevet* of St. Pierre, and in 1551 his tomb was made in one of them. As you enter the church by either side door you may notice the rose window; on both sides these windows were slightly remodelled in the middle of the seventeenth century. The pier arches of the nave are thirteenth century, the triforium fourteenth, and the clerestory another century later. But it is Ango's chapels that are most interesting; and especially the mixed quaintness of the Tresor, where there is a doorway half clumsy and half-graceful, a frieze containing savages (reminiscent of the adventurous merchants of Dieppe in its palmy days), Gothic tracery in panels that are separated by pilasters, and canopies of jeweller's delicacy over tiny figures, or sometimes over mere shells and other ornaments. In some of the chapels the restorer has been at work, and the screens are modern, but much remains. How interesting are the niches of the Lady Chapel, with their sculptured bases and their canopies like fairy wedding-cakes!

The church of St. Remi gives a good feature to the west end of Dieppe in its tower, a rather low edifice in three orders with a pretty row of external bells that form the crest of its roof. Otherwise it is not very beautiful; but it is interesting because it is a very early triumph of classicalism in France.

Whereas the renaissance began generally with *minutiæ*, the architect of St. Remi set up huge columns such as are found nowhere else at so early a date; for this was between 1522 and 1531, two or three years before the *chevet* of St. Jacques was

Dieppe.

being crowded with detail. At the crossing the piers have clustered shafts, and the caps are ornamented with little cupids.

The civil history of Dieppe, the enterprise and prosperity of its merchants, may be summed up in that of Jean Ango (p. 343). Its military history has centered round four fortresses (if we may plunge so far into the past as to make the Cité de Limes the parent of Dieppe), at Limes, Arques, Pollet, and Dieppe itself. Le Pollet I have mentioned; and as you will have a good deal about castles in this chapter, I will say nothing about the beautiful one in Dieppe itself and the gateway at its feet, except that it was built in the reign of Charles VII., and was held by Sigognes in the next century to keep the Huguenots quiet.

As you walk along the Plage you can see quite clearly on the hill above Puys a steep swelling in the green turf, such as makes the antiquarian exclaim "Roman camp!" If you go over to Puys, your respect for these great ramparts will increase;

you can walk up behind the hotel, and climb on to one of them, and see how large a space they enclose, even now when much of the area has been lost by the gradual falling away of the cliff that makes the base of the triangular camp. The natives call it the Camp de César, but really it is one of those fortified

Dieppe Castle.

towns which the Gauls made for themselves in the prehistoric days. Roman remains have, it is true, been discovered in this venerable city, but Gaulish ones as well, and the flint weapons which take us back to the origins of the race; some of these you can see in the Museum, with a model of the earth-works; and you can imagine it as it once was, filled with round wattled huts, and busy with the life of some primitive tribe.

Its inhabitants disappeared, or drifted down to Arques and Dieppe, ages afterwards, and then the Northman appeared and founded Dieppe whose Teutonic name is so closely akin to the English form—"The Deeps." But even in the fifteenth century there was still a "Curé de Limes," though he had no parishioners and no duties.

The castle of Arques takes us on to Norman days, though even there we are still on the border-land of legend. Robert le Diable is said to have rebuked his mother here for having given him birth, and there is a good deal that is fabulous about the story of Robert le Diable. As a matter of history, Arques

seems to have been the immediate parent of Dieppe. It was once a fishing village—even in the seventeenth century it was still accessible to ships—and some fishermen of Arques laid, it is said, the foundations of Dieppe.

The building of Arques Castle is historical enough. William the Conqueror, when but a boy, and less gloriously known as

The Casino, Dieppe.

Guillaume le Batard, gave the lordship of Arques to his uncle who was called henceforward Guillaume d'Arques. This worthy, trusting on his legitimacy, determined to make himself Duke of Normandy, and with careful foresight, set himself about 1040 to build a huge castle on the hill above the town. But by the time he had made his castle impregnable, his nephew had developed a character that was stronger than any walls of stone. No sooner had the elder William declared himself against his nephew than he was besieged within his fortress. Arques proved worthy of the pains bestowed upon it—indeed, it has never at any time been taken by force—and all the Bastard could do was to sit down before it, and wait for hunger to do its work. The King of France intervened in favour of the besieged, and succeeded once in forcing the lines and carrying food into the castle; but the Bastard held on, and

in 1053 the garrison surrendered. From that time forward Arques was one of the chief strongholds of the Norman dukes, and it was the last place to fall into the hands of Philippe Auguste when he won Normandy from King John. In the Hundred Years War it retained the honour of being the last Norman stronghold to surrender to the English and at the end to the French again.

In the fifteenth century it had been strengthened by an outer court and modified for the use of cannon. About a

Dieppe Harbour.

hundred years later, in the last stage of the religious wars, it was the scene of the great battle by which it is best remembered, the battle that secured Henri de Navarre on the first steps of the throne of a united France.

This was in 1589; but five years earlier the castle had been captured for Henri by some soldiers of Dieppe who came in seafaring guise to sell fish, and easily surprised the foolish garrison which had held Arques for the *Ligue*. When in 1589 Henri started his Norman campaign, and came to his loyal Dieppe, his first care was to strengthen Arques with artillery; he threw up entrenchments to connect the castle with the town, and he also fortified Le Pollet. Against his small but tried army came the Duke of Mayenne with a force of 30,000 men—about six times as large as his own—which was encamped over against Arques. Henri stood boldly on the

defensive, defeated an attack on Le Pollet, and day after day drove the enemy back from Arques. Mayenne was puzzled by the new science of war which Henri displayed, for the man who was to make France into a nation was as cool and cunning in strategy as he was reckless in personal courage. After many skirmishes, the news that an English force of 5000 men was on the sea and that reinforcements were coming to Henri from Picardy and Champagne, determined Mayenne to seek a more serious engagement, and the battle of Arques took place on September 21, 1589. The fields which surround the hill where the castle stands were then marshland, cut up by rivulets, so that Mayenne could not use his superior numbers to any advantage. But he was protected from the castle guns by a mist, and for a moment an act of treachery seemed to have given him the victory. Some of his troops approached the trenches of Navarre, crying that they were Protestants and wished to surrender to the king. No sooner were they admitted than they fell upon the defenders, and threw the camp into confusion. They even reached Henri himself and called to him to surrender. But he cried out, "Are there not fifty gentlemen in France who will die with their king?" His men rallied, drove out the treacherous Ligueurs, and at this supreme moment the mist cleared away, the gunners in the castle were able at last to open fire upon the enemy below, and the battle was won.

Henri wrote that night his famous and characteristic note to Crillon—"Hang thyself, brave Crillon, we have fought at Arques, and thou wast not there!" Mayenne gave up the campaign, and, falling into the sulks, was henceforward lost to the Ligue. Henri IV., though still recognised by few under that royal name, had won a signal victory in the tremendous struggle for his throne. And Arques? Well, Arques had heard its last cannon, and the castle fell gradually into disrepair, till in 1771 (before the Revolution, let Royalists remember), one of the most magnificent monuments of France became an authorised quarry.

And now let us examine what is left of it; for, little though its ruins may appear to the casual wayfarer on the road below, they are still of extreme interest.

There they stand, on the spur of a hill that was once surrounded by marshes; and as you walk on the outside of the huge fosse, you can realise why the castle was impregnable till artillery had grown out of its infancy. Four valleys meet below, and those who tried to climb up the hill would

Arques Castle.

find, when they reached the ridge where you are walking, the great unexpected ditch which Norman craft had cut between the hill-side and the massive castle walls: impossible to sap the walls that stand high on this chalk escarpment, impossible to win them by escalade across so wide a chasm, even if they had forced the palisade which once ran along the path where you are walking. To make assurance doubly sure, tunnels run under the walls by way of countermine, and you can see here and there in the ditch the openings by which the defenders could make a sortie if necessary. All this was dug out by human labour; at the south side, the one side on which the spur is not isolated by nature, the fosse—never less than eighty feet across—is enlarged; it is still impressive enough at this point, but once it was over 150 feet in depth. There is a postern here, protected by a tower, and commanded, like the plateau beyond, by the keep; the garrison could have escaped by this postern, had they not preferred the subterranean passage which was also provided—only it never came to that.

Formidable as the walls are now, you can imagine how

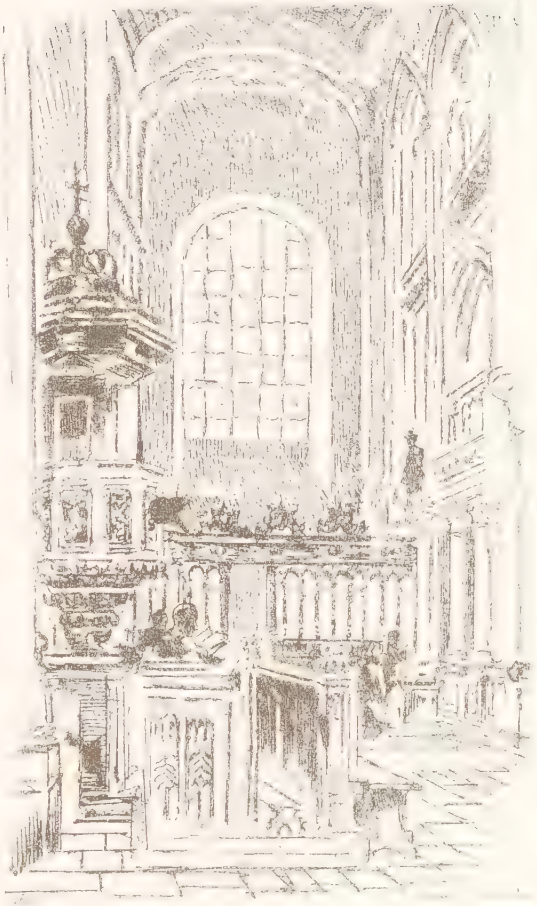
menacing they were when the castle was intact, and the keep higher by another story. And now you may complete the circuit of the castle, and come back to the north, where is the principal gateway. Here a genial guardian will open to you, but you will be wise to supplement his descriptions by purchasing from him the blue pamphlet, "*Description et Histoire du Château d'Arques*," for it is by a master, Viollet-le-Duc. It contains, too, a plan of the castle, and one of those fascinating restorations which bring the old feudal life before us better than any words can do.

I will therefore content myself, for the rest, with a few generalities. The outer court which you enter first is not part of the castle which Guillaume d'Arques built. It was added at the end of the fifteenth century in order to protect the castle from the hill opposite, which artillery had now made dangerously near: at the battle of Arques it proved extremely useful.

You next pass through the second gateway into the original court; on the higher ground at the further end stands the keep, which is signalised by Viollet-le-Duc as the most perfect type of a Norman donjon. After the Norman fashion, it is square, and bisected by a strong partition wall. If the enemy had made their way round the difficult passage of the postern entrance, they would have found themselves in a labyrinth of stairs and passages in the thickness of the wall, tunnels obstructed by doors, and so narrow that two men could not march abreast in them. The ground-floor, which was used as a provision cellar, had no doorway, and could only be reached through a trap-door in the first floor; in addition to this cellar, the keep had its oven, well, and mill. Although the first and second stories are divided into two large rooms each by the partition wall, the third story had no such division, so that, if the assailants had managed to penetrate into one of the lower rooms, the garrison would have climbed into the uppermost story and besieged the besiegers.

The church of Arques is a very picturesque bit of Flamboyant work, which dates from 1500 onwards. At the west

end of the south aisle you will notice a curious round window with star-like tracery. As you enter by the south porch, the low and rather broad aisles will strike you by their contrast with the lofty transepts and choir. Above the little pier arches a broad trail runs under the two-light windows of the clerestory. There is a stone vault to the choir, but that work stops at the rough barrels of tower and transepts. The screen in this church has survived the change of fashion in the Roman Church, to which so many *jubés* have been sacrificed, and is a



Interior of the Church, Arques.

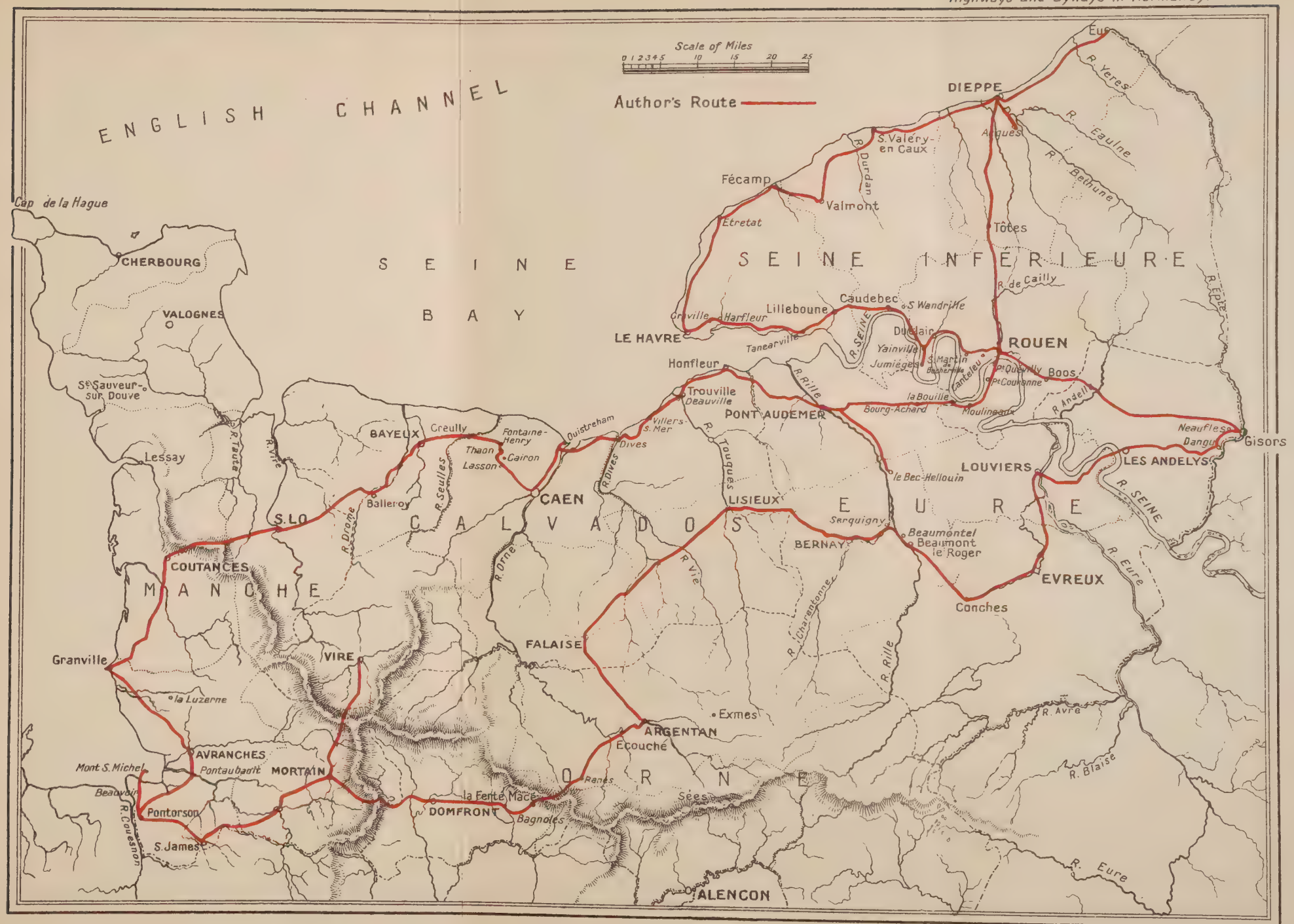
masterpiece of the Renaissance, with just a few traces of Flamboyant ornament. The whole effect of the interior is simple and clean, and its English appearance is heightened by the two round headed spaces in the François I. reredos.

A ride of about twenty five miles from Dieppe brings one to the northern boundary of Normandy at Eu, which is two miles inland from the popular watering-place of Tréport. Eu is generally associated with Louis-Philippe, who was very fond of the castle, and twice received Queen Victoria there; but to the historian it is more interesting as the place where William the Conqueror received Harold, and where he married his Flemish wife. The Château d'Eu, begun in 1578, is now to all intents and purposes a modern building. The church, one of the best in Normandy, belongs to the period about the year 1200, but its buttresses of unusual structure were added in the fifteenth century, when a good many alterations and additions were made.

One November day, in the year 1180, some shepherds, who were tending their sheep on the hills near Eu, were accosted by a stranger. He was old and very ill, and seemed to have travelled far. "What is that house below?" he asked the shepherds, and they told him that it belonged to the Canons of St. Victor. "Here is the place where I shall rest for ever," said the old man, quoting from the Psalm, and hobbled down the hill-side to the abbey gate, with the words still upon his lips, "*Haec requies mea in saeculum seculi.*" The monks took him in and tended him, and in a few days he died. No one could have guessed that he was Laurence, Archbishop of Dublin, and son of Maurice O'Tool (Murertach O'Tuathail, if you prefer it), a prince of Leinster; though all could see that he was a saint. He had died a beggar, smiling when they asked him if he had made his will and settled his worldly affairs. "Thank God, I have not a penny in the world, and cannot make a will!" But pilgrims soon flocked to his tomb, and the good canons found that he could have left them no

gift more precious than his bones. From the alms that were brought to the shrine of St. Laurence the noble church was built that is still called by his name.

Thus Celtic Ireland has its link with Normandy through a saint, just as Scotland has where St. Maclou is honoured at Rouen. But it is in every part of the province that we see how close is its connection with England and the Anglo-Saxon race. That Normans once conquered Saxons, that afterwards Normandy was brought under English rule—these events, important though they be, are of small account compared with the fact that Normans and English alike are sprung from a common Teutonic stock. In this Northman's country we are among kinsmen who are stamped with the family likeness, albeit they have forgotten their father's speech. And not its men and women only, but the churches and houses that they built in the past—nay, even the crops and the cattle from which they still draw their livelihood, are liker to what is English than to what is French. It is a country, too, that seems to suit the Northern race: certainly its white cliffs and green meadows, its hedgerows and orchards of cider apples prevent our ever feeling very far from home; and at every turn the names of its towns remind us that, like England, it was conquered by Romans, and finally colonised by Saxons and by Danes, though, indeed, the Cauld Beck and the Fells are well hidden under Caudebec and Falaise, and it may not be easy to trace Julia Bona in Lillebonne, Constantia in Coutances, or Augusta in this old border fortress of Eu.


Scale of Miles
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Author's Route
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SEINE BAY
SEINE INFÉRIEURE
CALVADOS
EURE
MANCHE
ORNE
Cap de la Hague
CHERBOURG
VALOGNES
St Sauveur-sur Douve
Lessay
S. LO
COUTANCES
Granville
la Luzerne
AVRANCHES
Pontaubault
Mont S. Michel
Beauvoir
Pontorson
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Balleroy
BAYEUX
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Thaon
Cairon
Lasson
CAEN
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Honfleur
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LE HAVRE
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Lilleboune
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S. Wandrille
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Yainville
Jumièges
Tanearville
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DIEPPE
Eu
Argues
Tôtes
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Pt Couronne
Boos
la Bouille
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Moulineaux
Cantelen
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